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IS THERE A FUTURE FOR CALVINISM?

BY

The Rev. H. Tydeman Chilvers



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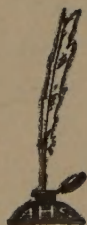
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Is there a Future for Calvinism?

THE REV. H. TYDEMAN CHILVERS.
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*I dedicate this book to my colleague,
the Rev. Wallace Pettman ; also to the
Deacons and Elders of Spurgeon's Taber-
nacle, to whom I am daily indebted for
comradeship and fidelity in the service of
Christ our Lord.*

PREFACE.

The following addresses have been delivered on various occasions, some of them forming a basis for Bible Readings at our week-evening service at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. There is no pretence whatever to give an exposition of the system of Divinity called Calvinism, yet we do claim to an attempt at giving some outline of at least a few of the great Doctrines of Sovereign Grace. They are especially designed to help young, enquiring minds who desire light upon some of the great facts of our Protestant, Evangelical faith, and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit we send them forth.

October, 1929.

H. TYDEMAN CHILVERS.

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CHAPTER I.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR CALVINISM?

IF there is no future for *Calvinism* then there is no future for anything that is of any value or worth. Every system of religious thought based upon the Scriptures, and all theology that is worthy of the Christian Church, are marked by that which is derived directly or indirectly from Calvinistic doctrine. Theology is strong or weak, virile or feeble, deep or shallow, in proportion to its Calvinistic spirit. Calvinism, in the truest interpretation of that word, puts iron into the blood, and gives muscle and fibre to conviction and Christian experience; and the people who receive it because they believe it, and then prove it in heart and life, are such as possess gumptious inflexibility with grace, in what they conceive to be the truth of God. *I honestly believe that the Church's great need at the present hour is a strong grip* of what this particular form of theology stands for.

When we speak of Calvinism it is not that we pin our faith to John Calvin or the system with which his name is associated, but because, on the whole, it expresses more fully what we wish to convey. I agree that everything depends upon what is meant by Calvinism; the term needs to be rightly interpreted in the light of what Calvin taught *as a whole*. There is much teaching abroad to-day that bears this label which is but a travesty and a burlesque of the real thing, and there are those who profess to be

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Calvinistic preachers and followers whom Calvin would not own or look at if he met them. To arrive at a sober and true conclusion as to what this particular system of thought really represents, we should in some degree, at all events, gauge the **WHOLE** doctrinal position of John Calvin ; it is not just, as many do, to take one or two fragments, and judge the whole by them. There are many who speak of Calvinism represented by the doctrine of "eternal election" and "reprobation" and nothing more ; without for one moment considering the setting of these truths in the whole fabric of thought.

It would be a great exercise for all the students in the theological colleges of our land if their Professors would take them through "*Institutio Christianæ Religionis*," by John Calvin, in the same proportion as they deal with other writers. It is not a dry catalogue of doctrines, but a great treatise on the fundamental facts of the Christian religion, in the light of the Character and Attributes of God. The late Dr. Jowett once said "that Calvin was the greatest commentator of the Scriptures that Europe had ever known."

It may help us for a moment to waive the consideration of Calvinism's future and to call to mind what it has been in the past. It is really too big a subject for me to attempt here, but there have been periods when art, literature, politics, were all influenced by the mighty impact of this vibrating system of theology. It moved not only in the circles of ecclesiasticism, but in every phase of life it sought

" To vindicate Eternal Providence,

And justify the ways of God to man."

When we remember that the "*Institutes of the Christian Religion*" was translated from the Latin into nearly twelve languages in comparatively a few years after it was

written we at once see the wide area to which it made its appeal. A Roman Catholic dignitary, thirty years after Calvin's death, wrote somewhat satirically of the use Protestants made of the writings of Calvin, and, among other things, wrote, "*They decorate them with gold, purple, and every costly ornament, as the most precious jewel of the Gospel, as if they were a treasure fallen from heaven ; and from these books they decide and determine every controversy.*"

In recent years no less a person than Dr. Fairbairn, to its praise, said, "*In modern times no system has had a more potent practical influence than Calvinism. It is a system of splendid daring, of courageous consistency in all its parts, in premiss, process and conclusion. It was a reasoned system, reason could understand it, and it could control the reason that understood it. The men who held it felt as if they had their feet upon the last and highest reality, not simply a way of salvation, or a path of peace in death, but a system of absolute truth ; and a faith so strong and comprehensive made strong and commanding men. It entered like iron into the blood of nascent Protestantism, and braced it to the most heroic endurances and endeavours. It made the men who in France fought the noble battles of the Huguenots : the soldiers and citizens who in the swamps of Holland resisted and broke the cruel and tyrannical power of Spain : the Puritans who in England and the forests of the Far West formed all that was and is bravest, brawniest, manliest in our religious life : the Covenanters who, in Scotland, through years of persecution, held aloft and nobly followed the blue banner that proclaimed the sovereign rights of Christ.*" Let men in the present, who do not understand, say what they will of Calvinism, it has a great past, and its literature, power and influence with God, has achieved great things through all Christian countries. Has it a

future ? Before we reply to this question it may be well if we endeavour to state briefly what is the real witness of Calvinism ; what are its outstanding doctrines.

First and primarily, it insists on the *Absolute Sovereignty of God*. This is its alpha and omega ; it is the basis of all its doctrines and the canopy of the whole system. Like the Book of Genesis it begins with "*God*," and in the light of what *He* is everything else is determined. But we must recognise that it never views God as some capricious Being who acts as a necessitarian, without the consideration of great principles as they pertain to God and man. Equity and Righteousness in God are insisted upon, but Love has its full and unlimited exercise within the realm of holiness. Calvinism presents God as Sovereign Lord of all, everywhere, and in everything ; it does this without making Him the Author or Abettor of evil, but distinguishes between His decretive and permissive will.

Sovereignty is always exercised with at least a twofold objective, the glory of God and the good of man ; but God will never sacrifice or compromise in one of His attributes, whether it be holiness or love, either for His Own honour or for man's welfare. The will of God is the unalterable rule of His conduct in every sphere, and that will is governed by infinite wisdom, and everything He wills He has power to execute, and none can stay His Hand ; yet He never deviates, for one moment, from the highest and supreme standard of Eternal Righteousness. God is always fair and just in His dealings with angels, men, or devils. When this revealed truth is in some measure apprehended by the human heart and mind we are not only awed and solemnised but are likely, first and foremost, to seek the rights of God, believing that therein the rights of man will find true adjustment.

The second and next great truth that marks Calvinism is the *Purposeful Character of the Redemptive Sacrifice of Christ at the Cross of Calvary*. The exercise of Divine Sovereignty reaches its culminating point in the wondrous transaction that was enacted at Calvary, so much of which is beyond our human ken, and into which the angels are for ever gazing. Christ's mediatorial work was not an experiment, but the execution of a Divine purpose. He was born into this world on purpose to die, and His death was predestined to have far-reaching effects even to the uttermost ends of the earth ; yes, and beyond this, for the death of Christ related to the world of fallen spirits, and also affected heaven itself. Dr. Forsyth has rightly said, "*The most poignant and potent event that ever happened, or can happen, in the world is the death of Christ. The whole issue of warring history is condensed there. Good and evil meet there for good and for all, and to evil that death is the last word of the Holy Omnipotence of God. There is nothing hidden from His grace there, and nothing outside its service, its ethic, and its final mystery. The whole world is re-constituted at the Cross as the final moral principle, its key, and its adjustment. The Cross is at once creation's fatal jar and final recovery.*" Jesus Christ "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." The ultimatum of the Cross is the establishment of righteousness and truth in every governed realm. Love and justice had a purpose in this death of all deaths which must and shall be realised. Calvinism insists that the mediatorial work of Christ cannot, and shall not, know any defeat, but it shall accomplish the purpose for which it was designed, and Jesus Christ "is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." Here we stand on sure ground. We see at once that the death of Christ cannot end in a fiasco, but

shall be for evermore a demonstration of the immaculate holiness of God, and of the everlasting love of Jehovah. There is an almighty power in the atoning sacrifice, a sufficiency and efficiency to meet the requirements of God, and to meet the needs of sinful men as they are brought to the once-crucified, but now risen and glorified, Emmanuel.

Thirdly, and lastly, Calvinism insists most strongly upon the *Effectiveness of the Work of the Holy Spirit*. It views the love of God, and the blood of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, as being counterpart, but Calvary demonstrates the love and creates the means whereby it may flow honourably and justly to the worst of men, and the power is present in the Third Person of the Trinity to make real to the human heart the efficacy of the Redeeming Sacrifice. The Holy Spirit is in the world to gather the trophies of the Redeemer's conquest, to bring home the Word of the Cross to the consciences of men, to make effective the God-given work of the redeemed Church. Calvinism teaches that our God is marching on in righteousness, in love, and in truth ; that His gifts and callings are without repentance ; and that He is " the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He will brook no unbelief that stands in His way ; He will both condemn and scatter it ; and if men stand in the way of His triumphal march rather than fall in line with Him, then He declares that they will have to bear the consequences. God has displayed His infinite grace to a world of sin, and His Gospel announced the fact that whosoever believeth in His Son will have everlasting life. It must never be supposed that to believe in the Sovereignty of God you must, at the same time, entertain a fatalistic spirit, and say, " What is to be will be." God has revealed His will and made it known, and " he that willeth to do His will shall know of

the teaching whether it is of God or man." The Spirit of God is stronger than the will of man, and the blood of Jesus Christ mightier in its cleansing than human guilt, and the love of God deeper and stronger and of greater power than the sinfulness and stubbornness of the human heart, and unless God does something with sin in the abstract, and in the individual, and in human experience, nothing can be done to it.

Now, the question is asked, Is there a future for this Calvinism ? It is my own deep and personal conviction that there is, and, moreover, I believe that already, amongst spiritually-minded and thoughtful people, there is a trend towards it. *There is a great national need for the assertion of the Truth of the Sovereignty of God*, for man has been and is seeking to-day that which is right in his own eyes, and matters have got to such a pass that governments and communities have admitted that they are baffled by them. There is a great need to bring home to the minds of men, and to the consciousness of people generally, the great fact of the Supremacy and Sovereignty of Almighty God. The nations need to learn, and especially our own loved nation, that God is the Lord, and He will not have His position or authority challenged, and that as soon as the people of this nation bow before His sovereignty, He will flood them with further light and understanding as to what His Own purpose and plan is for this particular part of the world which has been so favoured in the centuries past and gone. Industrial and political centres will change in their bias and in their outlook, when once they acknowledge this truth. I fear we have belittled God. He has been lowered in the estimation of the world because of our neglect of the attributes of the Divine Being. There is not sufficient awe among the people that will make them,

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not afraid of God, but afraid of doing the things that displease Him.

But if the future of Calvinism lies particularly in the need, the pressing and urgent need, of the nation, what shall we say of the visible Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in the world ? Is there not, at the present moment, the need for a mighty sweep towards the Lord God Almighty ? The recognition of His Sovereignty in Jesus Christ as the Hope of the Body, that the only law for the redeemed Church is that of the Law-giver through the Redeemer. Have we not more sufficiently to learn that our power and authority in the world does not lie in our great organisations, or in the capitalisation of our funds, or in the perfectness of our Church order, or even in a proposed ecclesiastical union between all Christendom, but in the Almighty Sovereignty of God as manifested in the atoning sacrifice of Calvary, followed by the resurrection and enthronement of the Man of Galilee ?

Yes, there is a future for Calvinism. People are inarticulately longing for a strong centre of authority, a dictatorship, if you will, which they will find in the Sovereignty of God when it is brought home to them by the power of the inspired Bible in which it is so clearly revealed.

CHAPTER II.

GOD.

THAT "God is" is a fact that constitutes both the objective and fundamental of faith. God is known by revelation, and He is a self-revealer. The world has never been without witness to the Being of God. He has inlaid the evidence of this fundamental truth in the very Nature of man, so that to some extent men know intuitively that God is, and nowhere is He bereft of such witness. The first two chapters in the Epistle to the Romans are unmistakable in this respect. Consequently men are without excuse.

His eternal power and Godhead are also seen in the works of His hands. Men are judged according to the light they have had, and now possess. A remarkable Scripture with its context is that which declares "the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness."

The revelation of God has been progressive, and in the written and Incarnate Word we have the full and complete manifestation of Him. God in Himself is immutable and never changes, and the righteous ground of blessing is unalterable, but the standard of man's responsibility depends on the measure and character of the revelation God has given of Himself. Equity and truth are the ground of His judgments. The written Word never argues for

the existence of God. It assumes that existence throughout the Old and New Testaments, and seems to take it for granted that He is entirely beyond the comprehension of the finite mind. "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

How majestically abrupt, and with what stately simplicity does the Book of Beginnings commence. "In the beginning God"—a Divine Personality, acting, speaking, creating, destroying, promising, prophesying, "God over all, blessed for evermore." The progressive stages of the revelation of God are clearly delineated throughout the Word, and in ever-increasing light Jehovah manifests His mind, will, and purpose, until, in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, we have the perfect image of His Person, and the effulgence of His glory. The gradatory manifestation of deity can be easily traced in the Scriptures—*His Works*—"God created" (Hebrew *Bara* in contrast to *Asah* translated "made" in 1st chapter of Genesis). *Divine speech*—"God said." *Grace* (promise and prophecy Genesis iii. 15). *Judgment* (expulsion from Eden; the Flood: confusion at Babel). *The Chosen Nation*—Israel, which God made the centre of Divine administration, the medium of witness to the surrounding nations, and the channel of blessing to the world. In His dealings with and in this nation their history becomes a further revelation of Himself. By prophet, seer, and vision the nation received the oracles of God. The Divine will is made known by law, moral and ceremonial, in which we have typology, full of prediction, of sacrifice by blood, access to God, union of Christ with His people, which may all be summarised under the word *grace*. In connection with this nation, you have outstanding persons such as Abraham, the progenitor of Israel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, followed by the prophets who testified until John,

and whose prophecies covered the past (their own day), the present, and the future. From this nation we receive our Lord Jesus Christ Who was of the seed of David, and of the Tribe of Judah (after the flesh), and also the Eternal Word. "And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." He Who came to His own, and was rejected by them, revealed the Father, and in Him we have the clearer vision of God. "God manifest in the flesh," "God in Christ," "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also." We can know God in the revelation of His grace only in Christ. "This is eternal life that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." I must know the Sent One if I would know the Sender. Through the rejection by the Jews of Christ Jesus, the Son of God, that nation is set aside, not finally, but temporarily, and the Church of Christ is substituted, and becomes, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the habitation of God, and, through the Ascended Lord, the centre of His administration on the earth. The revelation of God in this Church period is that of pure, free, and sovereign grace; Grace is enthroned in righteousness. Oh, wonder of wonders, the Son of God has died at the hands of men, and this death was the crisis of the world (John xii. 31). An awful fact, which has become the moral centre of all things.

All through the ages God had been gradually revealing Himself to men, and notwithstanding the fact that in the realm of conscience man had failed, quenched the light of nature, broken the Divine law, despised God's promises, cast out His prophets, He sends His Son, saying, "They will reverence My Son." Alas! once for all the favoured nation, and the world, side with Satan, and God's Son is

crucified, cast out, " was in the power of the dog " (Psalm xxii. 20), alone with none to help. "But God raised Him from the dead," and now, through a Risen, Glorified Redeemer, who, in spite of the hate of men, had offered a substitutionary Sacrifice, God still reveals Himself in pure, free grace, which triumphed at the Cross. Man has forfeited all claims upon His Maker, defied the Divine law, crucified His Son, yet God remains in grace, and the controversy now between Heaven and earth is not a broken law, but a rejected Saviour. "What think ye of Christ?" *This is the test now.* This is " the acceptable of the Lord." The Day will dawn when the Son of God returns to judge, when He will sit upon His glorious throne—how tremendous will be the wrath of the Lamb against those who have trodden under foot the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant! The message of God to the world now is, " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life " (John vi. 47).

In regarding the Bible throughout as the authoritative revelation of God concerning His dealings with men, there is no need to tarry for one moment to defend any of its statements, but it may help our future studies in this Book to observe at the outset the *absolute sovereignty of God*. Observing and accepting the one abiding, eternal, unchanging fact, " God is," as set forth in Scripture, we must acknowledge His sovereignty. The One from Whom all good flows has never handed over anything to other government than His own. Notwithstanding the appearance of evil triumphing over good, and the seeming great authority of the god of this world, the Lord's throne is still high and lifted up, and never has He, nor will He, resign the reins of government into other hands. Everywhere God is sovereign. He has never failed. Man has

failed all along the line, but God marches along in mysterious majesty and grandeur, but always in righteousness and inflexible equity. In the exercise of sovereignty all the attributes of God are brought into operation, but are never in conflict. Power, goodness, holiness, wisdom, love, each eternal and immutable, never one working at the expense of the other; there is no schism in God's nature, but a perfect harmonious whole. All this may be incomprehensible to our finite minds, yet with the open Bible it ought not to be beyond faith's apprehension. At the best we judge of God's ways from a very partial point of view, and with limited vision. If we could see and know all, we should fully acquiesce, unless we pervert the standard of truth and righteousness.

Divine Sovereignty as set forth in revelation should lead us to a steady, abiding, uncompromising, confidence in God, and a stern denunciation of fatalism. A shallow, half-hearted trust in God is owing to a very meagre knowledge of Him, which indicates a negligence of the Bible. The fact that God rules and reigns, restrains and constrains, decrees some things, allowing other things which He does not decree, giving and withholding, drawing and driving, forgiving and punishing, does not mean that the Almighty is a capricious, stoical Being, carrying out His purposes in an arbitrary fashion, irrespective of the observation of the laws by which we are all ruled, and governed, or the circumstances which environ us. Let men fall in line with God's revealed will, and trust Him therein, and dare to leave to His wisdom what is not made known, they will not be fatalists, but *doers* of the Word of God, using all the means that Word prescribes, and obeying the great underlying principles of all its teaching. If God has fixed the bounds of our habitation, then let us by all

means seek what and where they are. If diligence in business is imposed by God's Word upon me, then I must not be the sluggard, or I shall share His woe. If the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and God has determined to save men, and that salvation shall be realised by them in their belief and acceptance of the Gospel through the Holy Spirit, then let me see to it that it is preached anywhere and everywhere and at all times.

Calvinism has often been charged with antinomianism, and a lack of interest in social reform and moral developments, and has thereby been wrongly brought into disrepute, and antagonism has been created towards it. While we do not attach our faith to any man or human system, yet we venture to suggest that the men who were sturdy Calvinists were men of spiritual and moral fibre and muscle, and had iron in their blood; and where true, and not ultra Calvinism was in force, religion was exemplified in the highest, most powerful and effective form, though sometimes apparently harsh. In *The Times* of November 18th, 1922, the writer said,

“ Calvinism had its defects, but it was always manly. It could not be otherwise in its stern insistence on Divine sovereignty and human responsibility. It saved men from the puerilities of life, gave them purpose, and bade them remember that God demanded our service to the uttermost. It were an advantage if we had something of its rugged strength of purpose to-day.”

During the enforced absence of Calvin from Geneva, he was urged by the municipality, clergy and people to return. He resolved that Geneva should be a city after God's mind, recognising that religion was not exclusively for the individual, but also for the social life of the community.

Public righteousness was a part of his Christian programme. He effected a moral change in the city, developed its trade, improved its health, reduced its poverty, and founded a university. Truly Calvin had his faults, but they are forgotten in the memory of his abounding good qualities. There is a great need to-day of the old Calvinistic spirit in our religion, politics, social economy, and every form of national life.

God's sovereignty and human responsibility cannot in reality be an opposition, though at times they may appear to be contrary the one to the other. No man does wrong or pursues an evil course owing to any determination on God's part, but because he is oft-times allowed to carry out his own desires and wishes, in spite of his knowledge of the better way, or owing to his wilful ignorance of the true chart of life. We must never forget that God is exercising His will in an abnormal world, a world that has fallen from Him by its own sins, and when He deals with an individual He is acting with one who has forfeited all claims upon His goodness, yet He never judges a man according to what he has not, but according to what he has. If a man is not saved, is it not a fact that he does not wish to be saved, and consequently does not seek or pray for salvation or is not keen for it? Is it not equally true that the saved man is one who sought and prayed, and asked and trusted, until he realised salvation? I see in both cases the Divine sovereignty and human responsibility, but if you ask me where one ends, and the other begins, I reply, God knows: I do not. Man is accountable to God for the light he has, and "there is a light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." If he abuses, perverts, or extinguishes that light, he must accept the consequences, whether it be light bearing on the ordinary business, or social daily life,

or the light that discovers for the soul the need of salvation by Jesus Christ. We are accountable to God as He is revealed in the role of moral Governor of the universe, or as the God of providence, or as God in Christ Jesus. There are many Scriptures that throw light upon this somewhat metaphysical subject. Acts ii. 22-23 show that the death of Jesus Christ was not some unlooked-for event from the Divine point of view, but it was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," yet the Jews executed the deed, not to carry out any prophecy or purpose, for they were in total ignorance thereof, but simply to satisfy the desires of their own wicked hearts, and in their unbridled malice and hatred did as they listed.

Sovereignty and responsibility are seen in the history and destiny of nations as well as individuals. The great need of this day is a solemn awe of God among the people, and this is lacking owing to a belittling of His holiness and inflexible justice, which are not compromised in the exercise of boundless love and infinite mercy. God's rights must all stand before the rights of man, and man's wrongs can never be redressed until we recognise God's claims and rights.

In the light of the foregoing some may have enquiries about the heathen, and such enquiry may be perfectly legitimate. We plainly see according to the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans that in the absence of the light of "the good news" they have the light of nature. If God left them to themselves it was not that they should forget Him but rather seek Him, though in dense darkness.

What an illuminative address was that which Paul delivered at Athens (Acts xvii. 22-31). We must ever remember that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteous-

ness is accepted with Him. (Acts x. 34-35). All men are sinners, and out of the way, but all have not the same light, consequently not the same degree of responsibility, and those to whom the witness of the Holy Ghost has to come cannot stand in the same category as those born under the influence of Christianity. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The love of God goes as far as it can consistently with Divine justice. Resting here is far better than speculating as to the fate of the heathen. "The depths of God are deeper than the depths of Satan." The Lord has triumphed over all the forces of darkness in and through Christ Jesus, and it will be well for us to make God's sovereignty our stronghold and inspiration and comfort, and to rest assured He is just and true in all His ways. Faith, be it ever so feeble, never escapes the Divine recognition, and sin unrepented and unpardoned cannot escape everlasting punishment. May God's sovereignty loom great in our conception of Him. He is the eternal, unchanging, all-powerful, holy God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the matchless One, Love, Light, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Friend, the only wise God, Father of the fatherless, Husband of the widow, as One whom his mother comforteth—

MY LORD AND MY GOD !

"When I can say that God is mine,
When I can feel His glory shine,
I tread the world beneath my feet,
And all the earth calls good or great."

CHAPTER III.

THE PROTESTANT CONCEPTION OF GOD.

"**I**N the beginning God" is the sublimely abrupt and infinite statement that introduces to us the Holy Scriptures. It is also the announcement of the tremendous fact which forms the basis, and the alpha and omega, sum and substance, woof and warp of the eternal truths for which Protestantism stands, *viz.*, THE BEING OF ALMIGHTY GOD—a Being of Personality, Will and Thought who steps into Time from Eternity in a ceaseless, unprecedented holy activity.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." One writer has said, "If this sentence is not the very Word of God, I dare not, I will not, I cannot say it is the word of man."

If I understand it rightly, Protestantism stands for the religious principles of Protestants; but who are Protestants? Protestants are those who protest; first, against Roman Catholicism as a religious and political movement, and, secondly, against the many unscriptural tenets concocted and maintained by that system and enforced upon its members. Protestantism may also be defined as a positive and definite witness to Evangelical Truth as set forth in the Bible.

Protestants have a conception of God as the only True God: and it is this conception that compels them to take

a position of protest, both aggressive and uncompromising, against that which robs God of His honour, dignity and glory.

The Protestant conception of God may be briefly expounded in the words of Holy Writ, *viz.*, "*God is.*" The sure conviction of the *existence of God* is wrought into the very fabric of Protestantism by the power of the written Word. God is a Self-Revealer, and is known only by revelation. He has been sovereignly pleased to reveal Himself primarily in the Bible, and it is upon the Book Protestantism stands in its conception of the One who is from everlasting to everlasting. May I say here that the Bible is the *sole authority* for our belief, a belief that must not be tampered with by the human traditions that seek to add to or take from Divine Revelation.

We maintain that God is a personal moral Being ; that He is an ethical God, and as such is Eternal, Immutable, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Faithful, Gracious, Loving and Inflexibly Righteous. He is the Architect of the Ages, and His own Will is the unalterable rule of His conduct in every sphere and realm.

" Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign Will."

He is the Sovereign Ruler of the skies, and the Moral Governor of the Universe, and without giving any account of His matters, He executes His own purposes, doing as He pleases amongst the battalions of the Heavens, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. Absolute sovereignty is one of the outstanding Divine characteristics which He has exercised in the realms of Grace, Providence

and Nature, and is to-day a feature of His government. God has not acquired His perfections, neither have they been conferred upon Him, but they are essentialities of His Being and Godhead.

God is what He was, and will for ever be what He is. "He is the same, and His years shall have no end." Eternity is His habitation, and "righteousness the girdle of His loins." "The Strength of Israel will not lie." The "sons of the morning," His own creation, wait in squadrons for His command and readily obey His behest ; the lifting of the Divine finger is their law, and before Him they cover their faces and cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

The Bible sets forth God as the Unsearchably Great ; as One of Unfathomable Love and Grace and Mercy who exercises an unceasing Providence over all His works; and we accept this revelation of Him.

In the revelation of God He is beyond all Imagery. The Lord definitely forbids any representation of Himself by any means whatsoever. He is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another. What an awful mockery it is for man to make any material thing to set forth the invisible God. There is but One—and co-equal and eternal with God, the Lord Jesus Christ—who could be the "Image of the Invisible God," and such He is. If we may draw comparisons, it is somewhat pardonable for a dark benighted heathen to whom the light of revelation has never come, in obedience to that strange worshipful instinct that lies in the breast of all men, to fall down and worship the sun or some figure he may have carved for himself, but for a community which has the Scriptures and sets itself up as a religious witness, to institute an order that urges and sanctions worship to other than God

Himself in the Sacred Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, is reprehensible and unpardonable. Mariolatry, as practised by the Church of Rome, is a dishonour to Almighty God ; to say the least, it robs God of worship and adoration due to Him and Him alone. It is this which makes it an absolute necessity for Protestantism to state its conception of God.

We maintain that Roman Catholicism belies some of its own assertions respecting the Godhead by giving to the Virgin Mary, a woman indeed blessed above all women, a position which God's Word not only does not provide, but condemns as idolatrous. If there were no other reasons, our conception of God, as He is revealed in His Word, compels us to be Protestants. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them." God alone is to be worshipped, and He alone is the hearer and answerer of prayer. We emphasise the fact that the Scriptural Protestant conception of God is condemnatory of all imagery and representations of God. Israel, to whom the Decalogue was given, clearly understood that God is spiritual, that He lived to thought and not to sense, and is an Object of faith and not of sight. One has said, "Imagination dies when it is chained to the senses, but lives when it is winged by the spirit."

This conception of God leads us further to say that if God be the Lord Jehovah who stands in a vital relationship to all His creatures, and especially so to those who devotedly acknowledge Him as revealed in His Word ; *then His will, and that alone, is the abiding and exclusive rule of faith and*

practice. We claim infallibility for none but Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts. Popes and Cardinals, Synods and Encyclical Letters, have no weight in these matters. "To the Law and to the Testimony" is our watchword ; and we cannot allow the word of the Fathers to be to us an additional authority to the Word of God.

These are days when we need to make perfectly clear the Protestant conception of God. God must loom big to our faith, for He is such. He is the Mighty God who looks upon the nations as "the small dust of the balance," and the isles as "a very little thing." He is terrible in all His works, yet abounding in grace. A misconception of God gives rise to superstition and error, and is the cause of many of our industrial disorders. Men are often asked what they will do with God, but it is time we all asked, "What is God going to do with us ?" He can in righteousness, and in a moment, condemn for ever, or He can, in sovereign grace, save us for evermore. Ought we not to "humble ourselves under the mighty Hand of God that He may exalt us in due time ?"

In pursuing this question still further we may say that the Scriptures lead us to note that the Protestant conception of God is that "*God is in Christ.*" Our God is the God of Salvation.

There are at least three staple declarations in the New Testament which definitely help us in our conception of God in this particular aspect. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men—Himself Man—Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. ii. 5 and 6). Then there is that great message, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation"

(II Cor. v. 19). The third great utterance which is immediately connected with the foregoing is, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. v. 21).

In these Scriptures, with many other texts not given here, we have a most systematic line of doctrine upon which Protestantism stands. You have first the fact that Jesus Christ is essentially the revelation of the Father for the purpose of reconciliation between God and men; secondly that Jesus Christ in the complexity of His nature as the God-Man is the only and all-inclusive Mediator between God and men; and in the third place that reconciliation was mediatorially effected by Jesus Christ through substitutional and sacrificial transactions at Calvary.

This sublimely dogmatic line of Scripture teaching gives us at once a marvellous revelation of the Christ of God in the infinitude of His sovereign grace and love to guilty, sinful men. It displays a scheme and plan in which shines the excellency of Divine wisdom, the equity and inflexible righteousness of Deity, also the boundlessness of the resources of the Godhead. In this glorious disclosure of Scripture, God is set forth as the *God of Salvation*, and this is the Protestant conception of God. God is the author of a salvation *which cannot be cramped within any parochial, national or ecclesiastical boundary*. Its dimensions reach to the uttermost parts of the earth; it has the quality of the freeness of Almighty Grace and the power of perfect deliverance from the dominion and thralldom of sin and Satan. The Gospel it announces in its entirety as the free gift of God to be received and realised by faith alone in Jesus Christ as Mediator or Saviour. Salvation comes to the sinner through the all-prevailing merits of the Person of the Saviour, and of His own fully accomplished work at

the Cross. Should it cause any wonder or surprise that the people who accept this revelation of God in its historical and experimental values, do strongly protest against any system that dares to incorporate salvation exclusively within itself, and declares that there is no hope outside its pale ? Is it unreasonable that saved men and women who have received salvation as God's own gift of grace should uncompromisingly stand opposed to, and defiant against, a hierarchy which imposes penance, rites and ceremonies as conditions for the full possession and enjoyment of the blessing of redeeming love and mercy ? I trow not ; they can do no other. Salvation is the birthright of a living God-born faith which is finding its bedrock in Jesus Christ and manifesting itself in the good works to which it was ordained. We say again and again, " Stand back, all ye who would block the way of the poor sinner seeking mercy ; and begone any who dare to stand in a place and position that can be worthily filled only by One, and He the Advocate with the Father—the Daysmen betwixt the heart of God and guilty men. Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest ; He stands in garments dyed in blood and uplifts His once-pierced hands in holy and prevailing intercession for all who come unto God by Him."

This is the Protestant conception of God ; a conception which acknowledges Him to be the Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the only Potentate, who sits on no precarious throne, but one that endures for evermore. We place the crown of absolute Sovereignty upon His sacred brow, and humbly acknowledge His essential, personal, unacquired right to do as He pleases. We would enter into a sacred rivalry with the angels in saying with them, " Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

In this conception of our Protestant faith we see God not

only in His sublime majesty which awes the soul, but we behold Him shining forth from the clouds and darkness which are around and about Him, revealing His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In that revelation of glory He reaches out unto a sinful race on terms of New Covenant love and grace, and, at the cost of His own heart's blood in Jesus Christ the Redeemer, makes a way back to Himself from the ruins of the fall.

“ There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode ;
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God.”

He has, moreover, sent the Holy Spirit to lead men and women by the power of His own Word into that blood-red track which leads to the Most High, and to a city whose Builder and Maker is God. The grace which issues from God, leads to God, but always by the way of the Cross,—a way in which sin, death, hell and the grave have all been overcome by Christ for the sinner who humbly and resolutely says, “ *I will arise and go to my Father.*”

The foregoing conception of God must necessarily bring those who hold it into conflict with any idea which usurps the mediatorial position and right of our Lord Jesus Christ, or imposes upon them any conditions which bar the way of free access to God, or make it difficult for any man, woman or child to accept salvation. The imposition of a sacerdotal priesthood, the existence of the confessional, the claim for Mariolatry, are wicked and blasphemous inventions which run straight across the revelation of God, and are opposed to His glory and the real welfare of men.

Protestantism with its conception of God can do no other,

and, God helping us, we will do no other than wage a decided warfare against an institution which not only imposes its dogmas upon the individual, but which has in time past used and exercised temporal power to foist its doctrines upon communities and nations. Our own nation owes its prosperity and success to its Protestant conception of God, and may He forbid that we should lower our standard.

Protestantism most strenuously holds that the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Godhead, is the supreme Teacher and Enlightener of the human mind, and that it is His prerogative to give the witness of absolution to any man or woman seeking pardon. It is equally His sole right to take the things of Christ, reveal them to us, and open our eyes to see. Most unhesitatingly do we maintain that the Bible is God's final message to man, and by that Word the Holy Spirit works. It is therefore opposed to God's mind, and a dishonour to the Holy Spirit, to make any human tradition as binding upon man's conscience as the testimony of the Scriptures.

Sir Matthew Hale, the great and admirable judge, once said, "The Church of Rome hath mingled with the Christian religion the Pope's infallibility and supremacy, his power of pardoning and dispensing, his keys of heaven and hell, his purgatory and indulgences and images and adoration of them, his relics and pilgrimages and canonising of saints, and a thousand such kinds of stuff, most incomparably fitted to men's passions and affections, and so to support that most artificial and methodical failure of the Popish State : for indeed it is no other."

"One Living and True God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. In unity of the Godhead there be three Persons

of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," says Article I of the Church of England. "This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our Guide even unto death."

" O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOSPEL.

THE Christian Gospel, which is the only Gospel, is Gospel of God's Christ, of Paul, of John, of James. It is the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It has been verified in the history and experience of the Christian Church, a history which now extends to nearly two thousand years. We have not to receive another revelation for the new age in which we are living. We have a revelation from God which is both old and new. The most ancient, and yet the most modern message, it has proved itself efficient and sufficient through all the changing scenes and circumstances of past centuries. The infinite, inexhaustible contents of this Gospel cannot possibly be expressed within the limits of a few pages in a book. It is perfectly clear to any thinking mind that the Gospel of Christ from beginning to end assumes that man is a sinner, and has fallen short of the glory of God ; has incurred guilt and needs forgiveness.

It also equally assumes, and definitely states, that man is spiritual, that he is not merely flesh and blood, but spirit, and that he cannot live by bread alone. It also plainly recognises that man is savable; that is to say, that he is capable of salvation, that he has a capacity for what the Gospel brings. Now the Gospel is the only thing in the world that really recognises this tripartite character of man, and challenges absolutely, and from every point

of view, to meet his needs as such. As man by his fall and sin has become degenerate and ruined, the Gospel meets him just in that state with life, light, and power that can regenerate into a new creature in Christ Jesus. Being spiritual, man's nature needs more than a material world can supply, and the Gospel makes clear to him a way into the presence of the Eternal Spirit, and reveals means whereby he can be a participator of spiritual realities. The salvation of the Gospel is in every way commensurate with man's need, and man is a savable being in a way that fallen angels are not, and there are millions who can testify to its saving power in their lives.

The Gospel in its Godward aspect is "the glorious Gospel," the Gospel of God's highest glory. Here, as nowhere else, is the glory of God in all its superlative splendour. In creation and providence we have His divine power and goodness, but in the Gospel we have His heart also, a heart made bare, and pouring forth its love in incarnation, blood, and sacrifice. In the Gospel we have the display of all the attributes of God working in perfect harmony, and all the resources of God are engaged therein. He gives Himself in the Person of His Son, and more He cannot give. He could have created a thousand worlds by the word of His power, but in the Gospel he has spoken His last word, exercised His greatest power, and bestowed His most costly gift. Angels may well desire to gaze into the great salvation of the Gospel, for in it there is the whole of God. The Gospel is the very cream of His mind, all the wealth of His wisdom and knowledge; it is the grandest thing that Heaven ever produced. It is no wonder that Satan makes it his target, and that man's proud heart rebels against it. If the Gospel fails in its mission then everything is gone, for God has wrapped in

it His greater glory. This Gospel is Heaven's masterpiece, and it possesses a glory that eclipses the glory of an unfallen world and all the majesty of the works of God.

" God in the Person of His Son
Hath all His mightiest works outdone."

This is the Gospel that is committed unto the Church to be preached and lived. It is this that men are wanting to hear. They desire to know what God thinks about them, and the Gospel is the revelation of God's thoughts of love, mercy, and righteousness towards mankind.

The Gospel is born of eternity ; it is not a production of yesterday. It occupied the eternal Mind in the countless ages of the past before earth's foundations were laid, or the stars bespangled the heavens, or the sons of the morning sang for joy. It is dateless. It is Heaven's final message to the world, Good News, Glad Tidings, the Voice of Lovingkindness, the Message of Grace and Righteousness, the Divine Response to the Human Enquiry, " How should man be just with God ? " (Job ix. 2.) It is a Gospel that challenges and claims, asking no favours; making great demands, but affording provision to meet them; prescribes purity, but brings its cleansing efficacy; expects holiness, and carries with it the sanctifying grace that produces it. The Gospel finds man where he is. It is not a philosophy, but a Divine appeal to a man in his guilt, weakness, and misery. It brings in its womb a sufficiency to meet the need of the human heart revealed by its light. It is the inspired message of the incarnate Word, it has its residence in Christ, is the revelation of Christ, and has its consolation in Him. Christ is its fulness, its freshness, its facsimile.

In order that we may look more deeply into the profound

depths of this Gospel let us consider it, first, as the revelation of *the Infinite Love of God in harmony with His inflexible Righteousness*.

Sin is a moral evil, and differs intrinsically and necessarily from holiness. It is a blot on God's universe, and has broken the harmony of creation, but in the Gospel we have a promise of the ultimate restoration of that harmony through the supremacy in mediatorial sovereignty of the now despised and rejected Lord and Saviour of Calvary. "Unto Him every knee shall bow." Sin is the transgression of God's perfect law, and, consequently, rebellion against His holiness; and if love is to deal with sin, it must maintain the honour of that law, and vindicate the Law-Giver in all its operations and movements to save the sinner. Love has not stretched forth itself to save at the expense of holiness and truth, but has worked in harmony therewith. The love of God is expressed in the words of the apostle, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans viii. 3 and 4). The whole economy of love is executed in and through the Person of Jesus Christ. God is just to Himself, and so cannot deny His righteousness that another attribute may carry out its plans. There are no contradictions in God. Jesus Christ is the Gift of everlasting life, and from eternity He was God's first elect One, the Mighty One on Whom divine help was laid. "I have laid help upon One that is mighty." In the fulness of time Jesus Christ became incarnate, "was born of a woman, made under the law," took the position of a law-abiding subject, as the representative man. "In

Him was no sin." Undeviatingly He followed in the precepts of that law until he came to the end of it for righteousness to them that believed. The law could find no loophole through which it could enter with its condemning power ; no flaw in His character. Not only was He perfectly obedient, but His whole nature and character were a transparent exemplification of the law of God. As Christ thus fulfilled the law for us His righteousness is imputed to us who believe. He is made of God, unto us, righteousness.

The death of Jesus Christ was, further, a vindication of the Divine law, besides an offering for our sins. Death is the penalty of sin, and seeing that Christ stood as substitute for the sinner, " He Who knew no sin was made sin for us." To deny that it was necessary for Christ to die in order to satisfy Divine justice appears to diminish the greatness of God's love for us in not sparing His own Son, but freely giving Him up for us all. Consequently Jesus bore sin's penalty, which is the curse of God ; " He became a curse for us." We know but little of the momentous and infinite transactions of the Cross between Heaven and earth. Heaven, earth, and hell, witnessed the scene, but only God and His well-beloved Son understood it. The honour of God is maintained as inflexible justice inflicts the condemnation of the law upon His Son as the sinner's substitute. How truly did Jesus die in the abysmal meaning of death. In that dread hour, sin was, in Jesus, working itself out to its ultimate issue, which is God-abandonment, hell, judgment. God withdrew into the sanctuary of darkness and silence, and out of the blackness of that hour came the agonising cry of the Son of God, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " Jesus Christ was literally forsaken by God ; that was sin's

penalty. Hell was the ingredient of the Saviour's cup from which He drank so deeply. But love triumphed ! " It is finished," the Saviour cried with a loud voice. It was the cry of a Conqueror coming from the battle scene, conscious that the victory was won ; and so He died, bowed His head, gave up the ghost, resigning His Spirit to His Father's keeping. Truly " righteousness and peace kissed each other " at the Cross. The law was honoured by Christ as He rendered obedience, and then gave His obedient life for the offenders. Justice was vindicated and love victorious.

So the Gospel comes to us, declaring that God, in His Love, can and will consistently, righteously, and honourably, forgive the penitent sinner. Oh, the heights and depths of the love of God, a love dateless in its duration, distinctive in its operations, delivering in its power, wondrous Love, invincible, consistent, full and free to poor, wretched, sinful men and women, who in themselves were unloving and unlovely ! Think of the infinite, unbounded wisdom of God, that conceives a scheme of mercy in which His retributive justice, His natural and essential perfections, of which He could not divest Himself, and from the exercise of which He could not consistently refrain, should be magnified, and honoured, and all their claims met by His love, sovereign, full and free, through Jesus Christ His Son. The death of Christ, in its atoning, sacrificial, and substitutional character, is the greatest transaction in the universe of God. " God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life " is the mightiest utterance ever made to the world.

Secondly, *the Gospel declares the justification of a sinner, through Jesus Christ, by the means of faith in His mediation,*

What is it to be justified ? It is something more than to be pardoned, for the fact of pardon admits my guilt, and does not really make me less guilty. To be justified is to be so perfectly acquitted at the highest tribunal as to remove all possible ground of legal condemnation. It is to be put into a position which is beyond the condemning power of the law. " Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died. Yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God " (Romans viii. 34). Jesus Christ has not only met all the charges and claims of a broken law for the believer, but in his stead has fulfilled the law, and come to the end of it for righteousness. He has also borne our sin, which is the transgression of the law, for ever away, by enduring its penalty for us. Before the rigid law of God, the convicted, awakened sinner stands self-condemned, broken in heart, and on the verge of despair as he realises his hopelessness. Then he is directed to Jesus Christ and sees that He has stood for him as a law-breaker, has satisfied the claims of Justice, and has representatively rendered an obedience to God's law which brings in an everlasting righteousness. This sinner also finds that God absolves the believer on the ground of Another's doing ; and thus, in his helplessness, he casts himself upon Jesus Christ, and by faith accepts Him as his righteousness, sanctification, redemption and wisdom,

" A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall ;
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my All."

Through the Man, Christ Jesus, is preached the forgiveness of sins, and through Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which the law could never justify a sinner. Faith does not justify, but is the grace whereby I receive

the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. It is not believing in itself that saves, but the Saviour Who is believed. A grain of faith in the atoning Sacrifice of Christ our Righteousness makes absolution a vital, experimental fact.

“ 'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
I am my Lord's, and He is mine ;
He called me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the Voice divine.”

It is by the exercise of faith in Christ Jesus we come into the possession of that peace made by the Blood of His Cross, peace between God and one's soul. True faith always makes its appeal to the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus it may be distinguished from all false faith. The Gospel proclaims a salvation full and free, immediate, present, and future, to all classes and conditions of men who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah ! It is a Gospel worthy of proclamation the wide world over. It is still the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Like the apostle Paul, we need not be ashamed of it, but rather go without the camp bearing the reproach of Christ and never shunning the offence of the Cross. There is no substitute for this Gospel. Nothing else can take its place, or produce the same effects, or hold out hope to poor, perishing humanity. Let us, therefore, pray that God will increase the number of the heralds of the Cross, making them burning, passionate tellers of the old, old Story, and thereby winning for Him the reward of His sufferings, for He must see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

“ Fly abroad, thou mighty Gospel ! ”

CHAPTER V.

GRACE.

ABRAHAM BOOTH writes upon this subject :
“ Grace may be thus defined ; it is the everlasting and absolutely free favour of God, manifested in the vouchsafement of spiritual and eternal blessings to the unworthy : the Grace of God is eternal. Agreeable to the import of those reviving words : ‘ Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.’ It is also infinitely rich and divinely free ; entirely detached from all supposition of human worth and absolutely independent of any such thing as human goodness. This is the eternal basis of our salvation. From hence it proceeds and is carried on to perfection. Grace shines through the whole.”

Grace is one of the greatest and sweetest words in religious vocabulary. It is said that the late Dwight L. Moody was so possessed with the power and depth and meaning of the word on one occasion that he ran into the street and accosted the first man he saw by saying, “ Man, do you know what grace means ? ”

It is simply the love of God ; but love pouring itself out in inexhaustible wealth in and through a divine Personality upon guilty, helpless, hell-deserving sinners. Jesus Christ was not merely the gift of grace ; He was the golden casket which contained it, and was broken at Calvary that it might flow into all the crooks and crannies of poor fallen

humanity. Grace, as a mighty stream, flows on in all its unsullied purity ; but because of the deep divine channel, with its human shores, through which it travels, it reaches broken hearts and lives in crimson colour. The bleeding wounds of Emmanuel were outlets for the grace that came by Him.

“ 'Twas grace that gave me to the Lamb
Who all my sorrows took.”

We stand amazed, perplexed, embarrassed, before the ocean of God's grace with its inexhaustible riches ; its all-sufficiency, freeness and plenteousness overwhelm us, and with adoring wonder we exclaim, “ the exceeding riches of His Grace,” unsearchable, untraceable, “ beyond all knowledge and all thought.”

* Dr. Handley Moule, summarising the results of his study on the meaning of the word Grace (*Charis*), writes, “ The word habitually implies the gratuitous freeness of the gift or act denoted. Thus it means sometimes the free pardon and acceptance of the sinner, under the Gospel Covenant, in contrast to an acceptance earned (Rom. xi. 6, Eph. xi. 8, 9). Or, again, unbought divine kindness in general (II Cor. viii. 9). But it often specially denotes a gift and blessing working in the soul and will (II Cor. viii. 7). Here the characteristic of gratuitousness is still as present as ever, but the action is different. What is saving grace thus present in the Christian ? The answer lies not in any analysis of the word ; nor in any explicit scripture, for there is none, but in the harmony of revealed truths. . . . Grace, in its highest sense, is nothing less than ‘ God working in us to will and to do, for his good pleasure's sake ’ (Phil. ii. 13).”

* *Outlines of Christian Doctrine,*

Grace covers the whole ground of Salvation ; it is its background, source and spring ; it is the principle of all its developments, whether in the mind and purpose of God, or in the redeeming work of Christ, or in its application to, and power in, the life of a sinner. Grace emanates from the depths of God's heart and mind, and in all its outworking has the objective of God's glory before it; and is the ocean into which it empties itself with all its subjects, whom it has gathered in its onward course from a past eternity to the blessedness of the future ages.

We must not suppose that the revelation of grace is confined to the New Testament ; it is a golden thread running throughout the whole Bible. *Abraham is an illustration of grace.* The three great crises of his life may form an analysis of the divine record. (1) *The Call*, xi.-xiv., to which he rendered obedience. (2) *The Covenant*, xv.-xxi., so far-reaching and prolific of blessing, immutable, which he believed and accepted. (3) *The Cross and Sacrifice*, the offence of which he did not shun. Mount Moriah was the witness of his surrender.

The Tabernacle is a shadow of Grace. Its construction, the ceremonial law associated with it, the curriculum of its service, all pointed to and indicated the grace of God.

In the Prophecies we have the proclamation of grace : The historical books all show the preservation of the seed royal through which the grace was to be manifested. *In the New Testament* we have the full revelation of Grace in a Divine Person, the Lord Jesus Christ; and in Him we see the grace despised, rejected and hated by man, yet it triumphs in fulfilling its mission, and Christ is raised from the dead. The historical records in the Gospel commence with the Incarnation and close with the Resurrection. In the Epistles we see Christ glorified and Grace enthroned in

righteousness, and the throne of our exalted Lord is a "*Throne of Grace*." In the book of the Revelation there is recorded the final triumph of the grace of God over the devil and all the hate of mankind, and the paradise lost by sin is restored and regained by grace, and the glory of the latter is unspeakably greater than ever the former was or could have been. Thus we see Divine Grace throughout the whole of the sacred volume, first in its glimmerings, then in its foreshadowings, eventually enshrined in that peerless Person, and ultimately reigning gloriously and triumphantly.

" Grace is flowing like a river,
Millions there have been supplied.
Still it flows as fresh as ever
From the Saviour's wounded side."

It may help us considerably in our study if we classify the teaching of God's Word upon this great subject of grace,

1. *The Sphere in which grace operates is the Person of Jesus Christ in His mediatorial character.* The realm of the divine choice of sinners to salvation and service is in Him. "*Chosen in Christ*" (Eph. i. 4). God in His sovereignty exercised His divine will in making choice of men and women "*before the foundation of the world,*" in the countless ages of a past eternity. The All-wise Architect has His plan; His work of grace is no haphazard experiment that may or may not prosper, the love purposes of God's heart, chosen to an end, are not dependent upon some precarious circumstances for their fulfilment, and the grace by which He made the choice secures the means whereby the end is reached. Election is not exclusive but inclusive, it does not shut out, but shuts in. Any poor guilty sinner who

goes to the Lord Jesus, and sincerely makes enquiry that his "calling and election may be made sure," will find, to his great joy, that he was "chosen in Christ." While grace is sovereign in its operation, dictated only by God's will, yet it is as free as air. Sinners are welcome at Jesus' feet at any time and in any place, and he who comes to the Saviour, though more sinful than any other, will never be turned away. The great truth of God's electing love can be understood only as we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of grace does not exhort the sinner to ascertain God's choice of him, but it does assure him that eternal life in Christ is experienced by believing faith. The Lord has made His dead Son the centre of all His love's movements. What a mercy to be "chosen in Christ," for He is just all we can possibly need ; we are chosen to live in Him, to obtain salvation through His merits, to be cleansed by His blood, and He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification redemption.

" Grace first inscribed my name
In God's eternal book."

We need to remember that God, in the movements of His grace, had an eye to holiness in His children ; for He chose them in Christ that "we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." What hope is there for holiness except it be in Christ Jesus ; that God might see the end of His purpose towards us, and that we might enjoy the possession of it, He made Christ the sphere for the enactments of His grace and the activities of our faith. "*In Christ*," all in Him, "accepted in the Beloved," "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace."

By making His Son the centre of all His purposes, God

has not only secured our salvation *but has also the perfect assurance of His Own glory.* "To the praise of the glory of His Grace" is the primary object of all the outgoings of grace. In Christ Jesus there cannot possibly be any miscarriage of the Divine will, for He is the Mighty One upon whom help is laid. Christ has borne the responsibility of God's glory, and the sinner's salvation, and He has been well able to sustain all that responsibility involved. "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." The Father could find nothing but holy delight in His Son; He is the true tabernacle in which God can rest. God has entrusted His glory to Jesus Christ; and Jesus could say, "Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." We sinners may well rejoice that God's glory, in which our salvation is wrapt, is guaranteed, secured by Him through Whom, as in a mirror, it is reflected. "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The redeeming operations of grace were in Christ. Redemption by blood was the end of the Incarnation; Jesus was born to die. In His death He bore His people's sin, suffered in their place and stead, becoming the sacrifice for us. Grace and Atonement are insolubly linked, they go hand in hand. Dr. Adolph Saphir has said, "Grace manifests itself in righteousness, grace has a righteousness which is based upon atonement or substitution, and through the whole Scripture there runs the golden thread of Grace and the scarlet thread of Atonement, which together reveal to us, for man, a righteousness that comes down from heaven." "Saved by Grace" is the plain message of Calvary. In the divine enactments at the Cross, God's Justice is satisfied and Grace is magnified. By the Cross Grace proclaims a great amnesty to the sons of men, a year

of jubilee, which has been ushered in by the assent of all the perfections of Jehovah and each person in the Trinity. One writer remarks, " the sword of Justice is scabbarded in the jewelled sheath of Grace."

In Christ the Mediator we have also the *victory of Grace*. Its triumph is proclaimed by the Cross, which is the symbol of Satan's overthrow and sin's dethronement. Jesus Christ is alive ! The grave is empty ! Grace in Him is enthroned, and is the dominating feature of His mediatorial reign. "*As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness with eternal life.*"

2. *Grace is conveyed to the hearts of men, women and children by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.* Salvation is God's gift through Jesus Christ, but that gift must be transmitted ; and also a disposition effected to receive it. This is the work of the Holy Spirit whose sole office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. Calvin says, " the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ efficaciously unites us to Himself. The Spirit gives us to partake of the Divine nature by communicating to us the life of the Sole-begotten." Salvation, in its practical and experimental aspect, is wholly of grace ; God takes the initiatory step, comes after the soul, and says, " Come, for all things are now ready." Grace makes the provision, and then brings the sinner to share it. Conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the principle and faith faculty of the soul, whereby it trusts Christ, is wholly His doing. Grace finds the sinner, fallen, alienated, sick and sore in heart, and, like the good Samaritan, binds up his wounds, brings him out of the horrible pit of sin, puts his feet upon the rock Christ Jesus, and places a new song in his mouth, so that the soul sings,

“ Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes o’erflow.”

Unworthiness and unfitness may become very potent pleas for the penitent sinner at the Throne of Grace, and those very pleas, made in Jesus’ name, prevail, for grace is magnified in making such its subjects. The wondrous energy of the love flows on from the heart of God by the way of Calvary through Jesus Christ, and still onward in the Holy Spirit, reaching poor, guilty, ruined sinners, bearing them on its stream in the strength of justifying righteousness and truth until borne into the haven of everlasting bliss and glory, when they see the Lord of Grace, and at His feet cast their crowns. “ Whom He did predestinate, them He also called,” etc. (Rom. viii. 30).

3. *It is this Grace which gives hope to perishing men and women.* If salvation was on any other terms than disaster and despair are the lot of men. But if it is God’s will and pleasure to save ; that He has made provision so as to receive sinners apart from any human merit, and, on the ground of the sacrifice of Calvary, to forgive sin and pardon iniquity, then who need despair ? “ Without money and without price ” are the terms of God ;

“ Come guilty, come vile,
Come just as you are,”

is the message of Grace to a sinful world. The Grace that made and sends the message supplies the means that “ breaks the power of cancelled sin,” and gives the power whereby we are made willing to accept what God gives. Sinner, whoever you are, broken, down and out, in coming to the Lord Jesus you will be welcome, and the Gospel bids you come.

CHAPTER VI.

REGENERATION.

NO person can be a child of God but by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration, the new birth, the becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus,—for all these statements are used to express this great change—are attributable to the wondrous and prerogative act of the Spirit of God in the impartation of a new, holy and eternal life to the soul, whereby it is brought into a vital and experimental union with Jesus Christ. The entrance into the Kingdom of God is unmistakably and specifically stated in the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.”

Regeneration is a re-creation ; it is not renovation or reconstruction or evolution ; for each of these terms express a process of improvement upon what already exists. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” is the pregnant sentence in which Jesus Christ defined the condition of humanity. He never dealt with human nature in its perfection, but in its failure. Our Lord, under the figure of birth, conveys to us the idea, not that in the process one passes to a fuller, ampler, or more unrestrained condition of being, but that life has come into the realm of death. We are born of the Spirit, and from above. *The Scriptures make it very clear that the new birth is an absolute necessity.* In the very nature of Christianity, and in the constitution and conditions of the realm of grace, are found the great

need of a spiritual revolution in man. Jesus Christ, Who is the very centre and inspirer of the religion of the Bible, presents to us, in His personality, the highest ideal of human life, and in His teaching, the most perfect ethical code. As man stands before Him and listens to many of His utterances, he is obliged to say, "Woe is me." If Jesus has done no more than reveal to man what he should be, his soul is in despair. But Christ came to bring the "life" which is the essential of practical godliness; hence He says, in effect, you must *be* to *do*, and in order "to be" must "be born again." The Kingdom of God is so spiritual and so holy that if it were possible to enter it without being born into it, such a soul would be out of its element. No unconverted sinner could possibly be happy in heaven; the atmosphere and company would be intolerable; how much more in the Kingdom of Grace!

The necessity is also borne in upon us because human nature is sinful, depraved and fallen. The likeness and image of God, that once was the impress on man's spirit, is now defaced; man's will is switched off from the will of God, communion with his Maker is broken, and the bias of his mind is away from God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" are words that declare the necessity of the new birth, though they must not be interpreted in the light of any human philosophy which declares that the flesh in itself is necessarily evil. Jesus was not referring to any philosophies of his own day, but stating a fact of human nature. The condition of human nature separated from God is evil, because, by the fall, and practical sin, it has passed into a state of limitation and prostitution. The Epistles emphatically designate human nature as "dead in trespasses and sin." The Apostolic description of the soul before it is brought into union with Christ is, "*darkened*

in their understanding, alienated from the life of God." This is the secret of all the trouble. Man has lost his vision of God and has no true conception of Him. In the imaginings of his own heart and mind he has turned to his own way, which is opposite to God : and he has been trying to construct a deity of his own, either out of self or things around him, resulting in some super man, or thing that has become the object of his worship. Man is dead to God, hence the necessity of the new birth.

The life separated from God is under the rule of Satanic power, and is in bondage to sin, a slave of the devil, yielding allegiance to him, and executing his purposes. "Ye walked according to the course of this world ; according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience . . . and were by nature the children of wrath even as the rest " (Eph. ii. 2-3).

That man is totally depraved is clearly set forth in the Scriptures, and is a truth to which orthodox theology bears witness. But when we speak of total depravity we do not mean that every individual is as bad as he can be, but rather that sin has affected every part of man's nature. His intelligence is darkened and limited, the emotional part of his being is prostituted, and his volitional power does not operate in the sphere of his Maker's will. He does not *know* or *love* God, and his will is biassed against God. How sadly man has fallen ; he is a ruin, yet, as Dr. Campbell Morgan says, " a magnificent ruin " ; magnificent indeed, wonderful in capacity of soul, marvellous in ingenuity, yet fallen and without God. What must he have been in primitive blessedness ! Man has departed from God, but God has not left mankind ; He has given him a revelation

of His Grace and Love in the Gospel. Many can say to-day,

“ He saw me ruined in the fall,
He loved me notwithstanding all.”

The necessity and urgency of the new birth is acknowledged and borne witness to by every divinely enlightened soul. Experience confirms the testimony of the Word as to the need of a total change. The soul, when brought into the light of God's law and holiness, sees and confesses itself “unclean,” and painfully recognises it is very unlike God. Conscience is awakened, the heart is stirred and feels the need of an entirely new state of things. In the mirror of God's Word man sees a true picture of himself, and cries out in desperate need, “I must be born again.” The awakened soul corroborates what is written of human nature, and never considers the inspired description an exaggeration. The diagnosis of our sinful condition by the Holy Spirit, in our personal experience, is in perfect harmony with the delineation of our character in the Bible, as written by the great Anatomist. There is no schism between Christian experience and the Divine Testimony. The darkened mind rebels against God's verdict of the “natural man,” who “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto Him ; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” How absolutely needful, then, is the sovereign operation of God's Spirit in His regenerating love and power. Annie Steele writes,

“ How helpless guilty nature lies,
Unconscious of its load ;
The heart unchanged can never rise
To happiness and God,”

Can aught beneath a power Divine
 The stubborn will subdue ;
 'Tis Thine, Eternal Spirit, Thine,
 To form the heart anew."

It is always well, and also incumbent upon us, to recognise that the helplessness of sinful nature lies within the realm of the will. "Ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life." "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God or whether I speak of myself." Man is free to do as he pleases, but, while he follows the bias of his own will, it is pleasing him to do the wrong thing. He rejects the revelations of God's will because he prefers his own. As soon as he accepts the divine will he is at once brought under new control, and he realises "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Man is accountable to God for his rejection of God's own Word. If a man says he cannot receive it, then it is because he *will not* ; he prefers to follow his own sinful inclination. The awful power to reject God's written Word lies within the human will and must ultimately result in eternal death. Although it is true that fallen man is "led captive by the devil at his will," we must also remember that "when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted and divideth his spoils." Yes, there is ONE stronger than Satan, Whose will can subdue the most stubborn, and in "the day of His power" it is a great mercy to be "made willing."

If the Scriptures make clear the necessity of the new birth, they also make perfectly evident the certainty of it by the Holy Spirit. The fundamental declaration upon this momentous change was made by Christ Himself. "The wind bloweth

where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In this statement you have mystery of the new birth, *the mystery of sovereignty* ; also miracle, *the miracle of grace* ; there is further suggested ministry, *the ministry of the Word*.

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent in this translation of the soul from death to life. Whether in mystery, miracle or ministry, He is the Mover. From whatever point of view you look at this subject, sovereignty is apparent ; it is according to "His good pleasure" in every aspect and turn. "*Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.*" The figure of "birth," used in this connection, compels us to see that the initiative in the matter is with God. Divine life is begotten, therefore there must be one that begetteth. The life begotten in any sphere is the product of a generator who acts without consultation of the life brought into being. In the spiritual realm this is a great mystery ; and Christ evidently sets it forth in this aspect. It is a resurrection from the dead. Sovereignty effects its own miracles, whatever they may be ; but with this marvellous change in the soul, it is the miracle of Grace ; it is grace which covers the whole transaction ; unmerited and undeserved favour. The Word is the vehicle of the Holy Spirit, the chariot in which He comes to minister eternal life to the souls of men. It is the "*Word of life.*"

Let us look still more closely into this so as to understand in some measure the laws of the operation of the Spirit in regeneration.

The new birth is a radical transformation in the deep places of our nature. A new bias is effected within us, the will is brought under a new principle ; there are new

thoughts, new affections. The Biblical expressions corresponding to these are, "a new heart"—the seat of man's emotional nature changed; "the new man"—the whole personality dominated by a new life; "a new creation"—the whole manhood transfigured and transformed. To such, truly, "old things have passed away and all things become new." By this wondrous and unparalleled process the Holy Spirit becomes the uniting bond between the soul and Christ; for by the Spirit we are made partakers of the divine nature. He communicates to us the life of the Only Begotten of the Father, so that it is not we that live, but Christ liveth in us; "*Christ is our life.*"

As a result of this change wrought in silence and in the depths of our being, Christ takes the place of the self-principle. We are not our own but His, for not only has He bought us with His blood, but He is formed in our heart, and thus becomes the Master-passion of the soul. His will becomes the rule of our conduct, and His pleasure our chief concern. It is not that we are constantly, and with high tension, striving to be and do right, but rather yielding to the sway and power of the "new man." In the course of this wondrous process of quickening, we learned that our "old man was crucified with Him," and this fact has to be recognised all the way along. We learn it more deeply as the years pass.

The whole purpose of life is changed; new objects engage our affections, the will directs in a different orbit, the demeanour and deportment day by day are significantly different. Do not suppose that the life is brought under a rigid, hard and almost tyrannical obligation, and is under a stern necessity to be and do. Chalmers has tersely expressed the experience of new life within the soul, "the expulsive power of a new affection." A lady who was the

subject of this new life in its beginnings visited C. H. Spurgeon and asked him if it was not quite allowable, now she was a Christian, to visit the theatre. After a moment's pause, he said, "Well, try it." Delighted she went away, feeling that at heart Mr. Spurgeon had not forbidden the theatre. It was not long before she returned to the great preacher and said, "I've tried it, but I cannot go again; the theatre has lost its charm for me and I have no desire for it." "Ah!" said the pastor, "I knew that would be the result."

When the soul has really surrendered to Jesus Christ, and lives under His sway and power, grace reigns, and sin is dethroned. The soul does as it pleases, but it seeks to please Him, and its greatest sorrow is to do contrary to His will. The regenerated man loves the things that God loves, and hates what He hates; and the things he once loved now he hates, and loves the things he once hated. How can we tell we are born again? "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (I John ii. 29). If we have been born again we shall do that which is right. The practical meaning of righteousness is to do the right thing. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 29). Believing in Jesus Christ is inseparable from the new birth. Trusting Him as a poor sinner needing salvation; it is a righteous thing to trust the Saviour. But if we are born again we shall *pray*; the life in us will speak to God, and our spirits, by the Holy Spirit, will communicate with the Eternal Spirit. One of the surest evidences of spiritual life is praying; praying from the soul which is real fellowship with God.

There will also be the practise of *reading God's Holy Word* if we have been quickened into "newness of life." God's

message will be our meat and drink, our counsellor, strength and stay.

We shall also associate with other heaven-born souls. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (I John iii. 14). It is said "a man is known by the company he keeps," and if we are heaven-bound we shall seek the company of the pilgrims going thither. God's people will be to us the excellent of the earth. We shall also seek to attend a faithful ministry of the Gospel; a ministry that extols Jesus Christ, that expounds God's Word, that enters into our experience, one that inspires us to go on with God. Such a ministry we shall love and support and stand by.

How can I be born again? is an enquiry often made. It is an illuminating message found in John i. "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the Sons of God." There can be no new life in the soul apart from Jesus Christ, for He is the life, and He alone can save from death. "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."

The Holy Spirit works through the Word, and the Word presents Jesus Christ as the Atoning sacrifice, the all-sufficient Saviour, the Risen Lord, and the acceptance of Him by faith in His Word means life to you. We are said to be "born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God." The Spirit accompanies the Word, read or preached, and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," and it is by faith we receive Jesus Christ. When we are yielded in will to the Lord Jesus, and we receive Him as the Father's gift, and as the only remedy for sin and guilt, we are born again. Tarrying for some explanation of the *metaphysical* aspect of the new birth, or an understanding

of its *mystery*, will never bring us into the experience. But listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit through God's Word, and responding thereto, will most assuredly bring us the consciousness of Life eternal. "He that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RISEN LORD : THE FINAL ANSWER.

IN Luke xxiv : 40 are these words : “ And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet.”

They were the marks of identification to the disciples who were witnessing Him with a degree of doubt in their minds, wondering whether they were looking upon someone who might be He. And Jesus assured them that He was “ this same Jesus,” with whom they had walked and talked, by showing them His hands and His feet, and in them they saw the scars of Calvary. To-day in the midst of the eternal throne, the apostle John reminds us that He is there as a Lamb as it had been slain, whatever that may mean, and it means infinitely more than we can possibly imagine. But it does certainly mean this, that Jesus Christ in His resurrection and ascension glory, and in His mediatorial sovereignty, retains the marks of His sacrifice on Calvary. Without unduly insisting that throughout all the centuries He retains the scars on His feet, and hands, and side, of this I am assured, that when we see Him we shall know Him as the Christ of Calvary. There will be no mistake there. There will be some lamb-like distinctiveness about Him, some sacrificial glory that He will retain, so that all the sinners who have been redeemed by His blood, and forgiven through His sacrifice, will acknowledge and recognise with holy ecstasy and wondrous delight that

He who is enthroned and emblazoned in glory is the Christ of the humiliation of Calvary.

We consider that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, or the Living Lord, is the final reply to the Old and New Testament question. Bishop Welldon, in his remarkable paper on Modernism, says : " If there were no resurrection, and the body of Jesus Christ, when it had been laid in the earth, remained there like the bodies of all other human beings, then His Church was built upon a chimera, and it becomes necessary to account for the power which, within a few days, converted His disciples from apostates into apostles, and nerved them with a strength and zeal and confidence and devotion adequate to the evangelisation of the world."

The personal resurrection of Jesus Christ forms the basis and the rock upon which the whole fabric of Christianity is built.

Apart from the resurrection the New Testament is meaningless. The whole Book is as dead as a door-nail if you eliminate from any one part of the New Testament the implications, Divine statements, and positive assertions, that Jesus Christ is alive, that He rose from the dead. It is not enough to have the Cross enshrined in each of the gospels. It is not enough to see His hands and His feet nailed to the Cross. He did not remain there ! He did not remain in the grave ! But, thanks be to God, that unspeakable Gift has risen from the dead, for God raised Him from thence, and to-day He fills the eternal throne. There would have been no need to have written the epistles if Jesus Christ had not risen, for they are all established upon that fact. For example, the Epistle to the Ephesians, which delineates the structure, foundation, origin, and conflict of the Church of Christ, which is His Body. Imagine,

while you are reading it, that Jesus is dead. One would exclaim, "What is the good of an epistle like this?" There would be no room for it, there would be no foundation for its teaching, there would be no inspiration for its truth. The apostle could never have written such a letter if Jesus had not been alive. We are asked to believe that it was merely a kind of hallucination on the part of those early Christians ; that they were deceived. One writer actually says that they imagined they saw Him, and, being wrought to such a nervous tension, they went about and talked to one another about it until they all imagined that they saw someone, who, they said, was Jesus ; that it was a kind of superstition ; and so the news spread abroad everywhere. Men are too hard-headed to be carried away by such a story as that !

Not only is the New Testament meaningless without a living Lord, but the *Church's history is false if Christ is not alive*. For two thousand years the Evangel has been proclaimed north and south, east and west, and by its proclamation and propaganda there have been gathered of every nation and tribe and tongue where it has been preached, people who have staked their all upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is in this world of ours a community which is the most potent and powerful that the world has ever known ; and yet, if it could be proved for five minutes that Jesus Christ was dead, that community would cease to be. The Church is established upon the fact of her living Lord. Her life, her inspiration, her ministry, her everything is wrapped up in Him, not as dead, but as alive. The Church is made up of feeble folk. It is not many mighty, not many noble still, that are identified with the sacramental host of

God's elect. It is the common people that hear gladly the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But they are most powerful and mighty. They are like sheep among wolves ; yet they live, they thrive, they abide. All students of history understand in some degree what the Church has come through, what heroic men and women have suffered for Christ, not merely of Great Britain, but of all nationalities. Even France has her list of martyrs. Italy could give you a record of people of all ages who have died for the sake of their Lord. And what about the men and women who endured a long life of hardship for Him ? And I am not sure whether it is not harder to live for Christ than to die for Him. These are comparatively easy days ; but the very privileges that we enjoy now were bought with our father's blood. The very blessings that we have inherited have come to us by the crimson sacrifice of heroic men and women that were made what they were by the fact that Christ died for them, and then rose again on their behalf. If Jesus Christ is not alive, not simply as Rationalism, and as Christian Science, and other systems teach, that some phantom or spirit may have arisen, but as the personal Lord, the Christian Church has no foundation. It was a *personal* resurrection ; the very same Lord that hung upon the Cross, rose again from the tomb ; and that human Body, glorified, fills the eternal throne. If that is not so, then the whole experience and history of the Church is a farce ; there is nothing in it, and we have been deceived all the way along. It is a glorious deception. Do we realise the situation ? The Apostle says, " If Christ be not risen our faith is vain." " Jesus Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept."

The personal resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis, the fabric, the rock of Christian living. Personal experience

cannot be accounted for except in the light of the living Lord. Any testimony meeting would be as dead as possible, if one and another began to say that they did not believe that Christ was alive, that they were not sure whether He was alive or not. There would be no holy fire in their testimony, no hallelujah in their heart, and no inspiration in their record. We each represent different callings in life, varied conditions of home, different status in society, and yet all base their hope on the crucified Christ, and the now living Lord. It matters not what denomination we represent, the bedrock of our faith is the living Lord. He is the standard to whom we all make our appeal. He is the rallying-point of all Christendom. Guy Thorne might well write that book, "When it was Dark." He tries to picture in a dramatic form what the world would be like if the tomb was still sealed. He shows that the world would be wrapped in a darkness that could be felt. Our experience cannot be accounted for except in the light that He who *was* dead is alive for evermore ; that Jesus Christ is a living personality.

The teaching of the Old Testament demands a living Lord. The prophetic office, and the priesthood, with the stately office of kingship are all implied. In the Book of Leviticus is shown the priesthood as established by God, and the function and purpose for which it was ordained by Him. The office of the prophet is sustained by men who were seers, and who had the spirit of illumination and foresight, and, understanding the mind and will of God, were able to foretell, as well as to forthtell, what God revealed unto them ; also, kingship. What is it in the Old Testament that makes us look for One yet to come, who is to be the Prophet of all the prophets ? What is there in the Old Testament that makes anticipation keen and

strong, and makes one look out beyond its pages to find in Someone the perfect High Priest, who should not atone for His own sin, but for the sins of the people? And what is the meaning of those Old Testament prophecies regarding the Kingdom that is to be established in the earth, the government of which is to be upon the shoulders of One who will secure the unending nature of that Kingdom? If we close the Book at the prophecy of Malachi, we are disappointed. The priesthood, the prophecies, and the kingship of the Old Testament, true as every part of it is, are but a foreshadowing of Someone and something yet to come. However glorious Christ's death may have been, and however glorious His life, if His death was the end, then the Old Testament is a blank. What does Moses say? "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up, like unto me. Unto Him ye shall hearken." He is a Prophet that shall be heard, and whose message must be hearkened to, for, if neglected, it will mean eternal death. And no prophet arose until Jesus came like unto Moses. That was a foreshadowing of Christ through the teaching of Moses.

Also in Jesus Christ there is the great High Priest, a Priest that not only offers the sacrifice, but pleads the power of His sacrifice afterwards; and this brings us to the point of the sacrificial law which foreshadowed this particular priesthood, the priesthood that was established. For instance, the Day of Atonement, the offering of the sacrifice on the brazen altar, and the taking of the blood of the sacrifice by the altar of incense within the beautiful veil, and sprinkling the blood before the mercy-seat, and there communing with God face to face before the shekinah glory. And so much foreshadowing causes us to expect that there is Someone this side of the Cross Who is to take

the blood in all its prevailing power, and to make it competent and powerful for men. Jesus Christ answers to that foreshadowing of the ceremonial law. Just as people waited outside the holy place for the priest to come out again, and to impart his blessings, so to-day we are waiting outside while He has gone within the veil until He comes again in His Second Advent glory ; then He will assure all men that He is alive. One day He will step out from the holy place, just as the priest did, without sin unto salvation.

The typology of the Old Testament demands a living Christ. We remember the wave sheaf and the Passover Feast ; then they were to count seven Sabbaths. On the first Sabbath after the Passover Feast they were to take the first sheaf of the harvest, present it, and wave it before the Lord. That was to be the first-fruits. Then they were to count seven Sabbaths, which would mean seven weeks, forty-nine days, and on the fiftieth day they were to take the result of the harvest and the first-fruits, and present them to the Lord. The first-fruit was first in the sheaf, and that was the assurance of the rest to follow. And so fifty days after the death of the Lord Jesus Christ came the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given ; and the demonstration of the fact that Jesus Christ was alive and ascended on high was the downcoming of the Spirit of God on that Day. The Church of Christ to-day witnesses to the invisible presence of One who is a living Personality, and whose life and power throb in the minds of the sanctified Church.

The living Christ is the great reply to enquiries as to the safety and the ultimate glory of the Church of Jesus Christ. We need have no fear about the Church of Christ ; God has it in His own keeping. " The gates of Hell shall not

prevail against her." It is established upon too good a foundation. But we want to remember that this Book does imply and teach and definitely state that she may be stricken and smitten and cut down and laid low ; and she has been, and she may be again. Her very blood will be the seed of further advancement. Also when we do fail in the fight we are not lost. Jesus Christ never loses a member of His Church. Further, in the great conflict of the Church throughout the centuries, what we call defeat is, in the light and teaching of the Bible, and in the whole economy of grace, a step forward. That has always been so. An illustration is found in the death of Stephen. It was one of the greatest blessings that could have happened in the Christian Church when Stephen was stoned. Young Saul was there, and he saw the death of Stephen, and he never forgot it. Years afterwards he said. " I consented unto his death. I held his clothes." It seems that the arrow of conviction entered his soul, and because of this the malice of his unregenerate heart went to a white heat, and caused him to ask for letters to persecute the saints. But the light above the brightness of the sun smote him, and he found himself at the feet of the living Lord, and he said : " What wilt Thou have me to do ? " " He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." All the blood that has been spilt on the Congo has not been lost. Those men and women who were beheaded in China were not lost, neither was their work in vain. The very fact that they died for the sake of their Lord was the means of winning others for the Saviour. People were burned at Smithfield Market, and never a martyr died but some of the onlookers bowed before the feet of Him for whom the martyr died.

Then we remember the Headship of Jesus Christ ; He is the Head of the Church. What is a body without a head ? Or a head without a body ? There is no schism between Christ and His Church, and He is the Head of all the members, and while the Head remains the body is secure. Also, the representation of the Lord Jesus Christ for His people. He is anticipating the time when He will present us faultless and blameless before the presence of His glory. In the meantime, He represents us. Some say, "If this is the ultimate glory of the Church, why enter the conflict, why 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus' ? " This is part of the propaganda of the Church of Jesus Christ. She is to fill up what is behind of the suffering of her Lord. She is to walk up the blood-stained path. She can never atone for others ; she can never offer a meritorious sacrifice ; but she can follow her Lord. "It is the way the Master went ; should not the servant tread it still ? " Members of the Church of Christ should not shirk the hard work, the tough path, the stony way ; but rather let them say : "Wherever He lead, through flood, through flame, if Jesus leads we follow Him." The victory of the Church in its ultimate glory depends on Him, and at the end He is going to crown us as though we did it all ourselves. He will say : "They overcame ;" and some-one will whisper : "By the blood of the Lamb." And again the response will come : "By the word of their testimony."

The Second Advent will make it all clear ; the coming of the Lord Jesus is the hope of the Church. He is coming soon ; His people will be glad to see Him when it is time for Him to come ; meanwhile, be clothed upon with the righteousness of the Lord. Beneath His Cross, in the light of His throne, we go on from day to day rejoicing that

Jesus lives, and anticipating the day when it will be apparent to all in Heaven and earth that the Living One is the One who once was dead, but is alive for evermore.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MIGHTY CONFLICT.

IT is an age-long battle, this battle between right and wrong, light and darkness, truth and error, holiness and wickedness, Christ and Satan, yet we are not left in any doubt as in whose favour the battle will turn and terminate. Besides being age-long it is universal; wheresoever truth comes it is in conflict with error, and upon all territory where Christ alights He is confronted by Satan. The history of the contest of the millenniums between the forces of heaven and hell has yet to be written, and none will be able to write it but the One who has been the invisible witness at every battle, the Holy Spirit of God. The war rages, not only on the continents of the world, and in communities, but in the heart of the individual.

The Christian warrior needs always to remember at least two things, the first is, that he has behind him all the infinite resources of Almighty God, released by the victory of Calvary: and, secondly, that at the back of evil and wrong are the mighty Satanic forces of hell, which have been gloriously defeated by the Captain of our Salvation. We must not be surprised, as the present age nears its close, if the enemy presses the battle to close grips by deep and most insidious forms of strategy; the evil spirits will work with such wiles that the unwary, and those ignorant of their devices, will be deceived unawares. It is

essential to know the tactics of the opposing forces, and to remember that armour and weapons, which we must wear and use, are at the disposal of our faith for this warfare.

It will considerably help the soldier of the Lord to distinguish between the outworking of corrupt human nature and the movements and *modus operandi* of Satan ; the former is the outcome of a condition that has been effected by Satan, while the latter is often the execution of deep laid plans in the spiritual and intellectual realm. It is no credit to the devil to bring a man into a wretched state of debauchery and drunkenness with a broken constitution ; I rather fancy he is often chagrined by the awful spectacle of his own work, and therefore gives impetus to the uplifting power of civilisation and reformation, and ingeniously gives the impression it is Christianity. It is like Satan to work so as to make men appear as Christians without being so, and institute outward reformation without an inward regeneration effected by the power of the death and sacrifice of Christ, and the energy of the Holy Spirit. Satan's work is to counterfeit the work of the Lord Jesus Christ ; this accounts for Christian Science, Russellism, Spiritism and Rationalism, which are at our doors. It is the god of this age that blinds the minds of men lest the light of the Gospel of Christ should shine upon them ; the recognition of this would lead preachers and teachers to adopt certain tactics in dealing with men. It does seem that just at the present time the devil's masterpiece is to darken and cloud the human mind to the revelation of God. Intellectual pride of the mind, and the sophistries of Satan, are working hand in hand, so that the very elect are being deceived ; this is the cause of so much departure from the plain truth by many of our leaders. They act, as they think, conscientiously, but are deceived,

and have been caught in the snare of that master intelligence, Satan, who ever suits his bait to the temperament, mind and circumstances of the one he attacks. This has been evidenced recently by a Baptist minister who first disputed with God's truth, and then, when a great sorrow overtook him, became the dupe of spiritism, and the enemy has deceived him with false comfort. Abounding active faith in the truth of God makes one almost impervious to the appeal of the devil, when, by sophistry and cunning, he seeks to overtake us in the realm of our faith and intellect. The *mind* in these days needs to be governed by the Holy Spirit, and to be kept under the sheltering power of the blood of Christ. "Casting down reasoning and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (R.V.). Behind all the cults of the day is Satanic ingenuity ; therefore, all leaders need to watch and pray, and to shelter their minds where the wicked one toucheth them not. The malice of evil spirits is in the Church of Christ in disguise, and because of that beguiling disguise the spirits find entrance where we little expect them. The Deceiver is still alert, and, because his time is short, is buying up every opportunity, and attacking true believers not with blatant wickedness, in the ordinary sense of that term, but with plausible, deceiving propositions which, when carried out, are a perversion of the Gospel of Christ, and of the methods of the Holy Spirit. There is a great tendency to supplant the Spirit by the flesh, to adopt carnal methods in the place of spiritual weapons, and this applies not only to those who are named modernists, but, alas, among the fundamentalists, also. The conflict the fundamentalist has raised against the modernist who is opposing God's truth

is quite justifiable while it is conducted along lines of truth, and is not gendered by jealousy and love of strife. But we fundamentalists need to be very guarded just now, for there are some who cannot find any heresy among their brethren, who are nevertheless ferreting out points of divergence of thought upon fundamentals so precious to each, which ought not to interfere with the real experienced "unity of the Spirit," but alas, alas, it is for the divisions among the evangelicals we need to mourn. Let us also watch lest, while we do not fall a prey to the device of the enemy in the realm of the mind, there is any moral delinquency in our life, or inconsistency in our business transactions, or fleshly and carnal methods in our service. If Satan cannot find entrance into one part of our tripartite nature he will try another; spirit, soul and body must be given over to the Lord, and hid by faith in the protecting power of the victory of Calvary.

In this mighty conflict we must know that Jesus Christ has disclosed the tactics of the enemy, and has triumphed over him for ever.

The presence of Christ in the days of His flesh again and again compelled the evil spirits to show themselves and to speak; this is instanced in the New Testament repeatedly. We must ever remember that Christ was driven into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil; the temptation scene was an item in the divine programme. The presence of Christ forced Satan to close combat in the light, and the contest lasted till Satan had ended all his temptation; then he left the Saviour, foiled and defeated, and Christ left the wilderness as He entered it, in the power of the Spirit, and went to Galilee. The wicked spirits were never once known to refuse obedience to His word, they came out as He charged them. At the Cross all the

armies of hell were arraigned against the Lord's anointed Christ, but "He put off from Himself the principalities and the powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." "It is finished," cried the Saviour, with a loud voice, as He left that field of bloody conflict; the victory was won, "the prince of this world has been cast out," Jesus has triumphed. Yes, Jesus Christ exposed, exercised, defeated and triumphed over all the forces of darkness, He has put His bruised heel upon Satan's head, and Christ is on the Throne as the Victor. By death He conquered, by divine power He was raised from the dead, and He ascended leading captivity captive. Now, "as He is so are we in this world," and as we stand in Him, our glorified Lord, having been crucified and raised with Him, and made to sit with Him in Heavenly places, His victory becomes ours. Christ has *actually* gained the victory, potentially it is ours through Him, but it is to be literalised in the world among men through His mystic body the Church; the Holy Spirit functions in the victory of Calvary through her, she being the human instrument through which He executes His purpose. It is as the Church stands in the Name of her Lord, to witness and to function for Him against the world, the flesh and the devil, she comes into this mighty conflict. The Church should face the conflict in the victory of her Lord, and take it into the battle with a determination to carry it through to the end. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." The way to the place of victory, individually or collectively, is by the path of the Cross, known in our deepest being. The conflict is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers.

Emerson says of Napoleon Bonaparte, "He never blundered into victory, but won his battles in his head

before he won them on the field." That great warrior also said of himself, "My hand of iron was not at the extremity of my arm, it was immediately connected with my head." What was true in the awful reality of human warfare is figuratively and solemnly true in spiritual conflict. You cannot muddle into victory, and the battle is not effectively waged without enlightenment of mind ; what was said of Napoleon's head must be true of the Christian soldier's faith. The battle of the Lord must be fought and won in the realm of faith and prayer before realised in the open field. John Bunyan, in his Holy War, made Lord Understanding the Lord Mayor of Mansoul, and charged him "to read in the Revelation of Mysteries all the days of his life *that he might know how to perform his office aright.*" It is a dangerous thing to enter upon the warpath without an enlightened understanding.

Knowledge is an essential of Christian warfare. We must not be ignorant of the devices of the enemy. The devil, who is a fallen archangel possessed of supernatural power, "goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," but he also can appear as an "angel of light," or a "wolf in sheep's clothing." He who has been defeated by Christ personally, seeks to destroy Christ *mystically* by attacking His Body, the Church, and the members thereof in particular. Christ and His Cross form the objective of Satan's attacks ; hence to perfect the meaning thereof, or to draw attention therefrom, or to hinder the vital experience therein, is always his aim. The whole hierarchy of hell is against the will of God in Christ being performed in the Church. Satan, with his hosts of spiritual darkness, is attacking the bodies, minds, spirits and circumstances of God's children, to hinder the works of God. We need to know what is behind many of the material things

that are blocking the path of progress in the service of the Lord ; our warfare is not with " flesh and blood," but with " principalities and powers " ; and to recognise this, and to act accordingly, is essential to practical victory. To be constantly dealing with second causes, and leaving the first untouched, you leave free the personal first cause to continue his attack, or to change his strategy. We are charged to "*resist the devil.*"

We need also to be well assured of Christ's own victory. Christ is on His Throne which He has won by His glorious triumph. The enemy has been judged, and cast out by Christ, at Calvary, and further demonstrated by His resurrection and ascension ; over the world, sin, death, and hell, He reigns victoriously. The Holy Spirit has come to gather the spoil from the field of conflict, and to literally possess what Christ has personally gained. But the Divine Gatherer functions through the mystic body of Christ, and makes His mighty claims in the name of the Victor of Calvary, through the Church, and it becomes the Church to be usable in His hands, and responsive to His will. The whole work of the Holy Spirit in and through believers is contested at every turn, and at every point, by the vanquished foe ; hence the present conflict.

For this warfare armour is provided by the Lord. (Eph. vi. vv. 10-18). Piece by piece should the armour be taken and put on ; and we shall find that it covers from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, and we must never forget to take in our hand the "*Sword of the Spirit.*" The putting on of the armour is faith appropriating all that Christ is to us, and all He has provided for us. This equipment is not simply for admiration ; it is to be worn and used in conflict, and, withal, we are to stand,

and having done all, still to stand, and shake from us the opposing forces. Furthermore, the armour is such that we are to *face* the foe ; no promise is made for retreat ; it is aggressive warfare, waged in the spirit realm and in the heavenlies. The Captain of our salvation has gone before, conquering every step, and now upon His Throne He says, " Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

All who truly engage in this conflict do so from the vantage ground of victory. By virtue of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ we stand in His triumph, and carry His victory into the field, by faith, with a determination to carry it through. It is not so much gaining victory as urging the claims of the Victory of Calvary to the point of resistance unto death. This warfare must be waged within the territory of our own life before we can recover the Lord's possessions elsewhere. The power of the Lord's triumph, with all its claims, must be realised in our tripartite nature—spirit, soul and body—before we can bring home trophies from the field. It is in the exercise of real faith prayer, offered in the Name of the Victor, that the greater battles are fought ; it is on your knees in the secret place alone, or in co-operation with kindred souls, that the sternest victories are realised. The other day, a vessel was regulated at sea by an electrician's touch of a button on land ; and it is when we really get through to the Lord in prayer, focussing on the matter in hand, but particularly upon the evil forces behind that matter, that we experience victory ; and then we can go in that victory to the scene of action in our service for the Lord. Our Great Master needs men and women who will dare to stand with Him for the execution of His own will and purpose in the world, which is resisted by all the mighty forces of evil. We do not, for one moment,

doubt God's final victory—it must and shall come ; neither do we hesitate as to the triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He has gloriously gained, but we must not forget that the triumph of the Cross is to be realised and literalised in the world through the blood-bought, redeemed Church.

It is a mighty conflict, this battle of the Lord ; it necessitates in the warriors, going “ without the camp, bearing His reproach,” all the equipment of the indwelling Spirit of God ; but, blessed be the Name of the Triumphant Saviour, it is a winning battle. “ He must reign until all enemies are made His footstool.”

“ Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth His successive journeys run ;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”

The way into spiritual warfare is always by a definite personal experience of the death of the Cross and the power of the resurrection. Not only must life come to us by His death, but we must also die to live. Dead to sin and self by the power of Calvary, and alive unto God in the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus, is a necessary qualification for engaging in the Lord's battles. The battle is the Lord's, not ours ; therefore, in the Spirit of the Lord, and with the weapons of the Lord, we must enter the contest. It is no child's play to rally to the standard, not for review, but for hard fighting ; the sword wielded must always be wet with the enemy's blood, and never sheathed. The arch-foe is ever on the alert, and buys up any unwary moment of the true soldier of Christ. In one of the American Civil Wars, at one point of the battle, day after day, sentinel

after sentinel had been shot down in the early hours of the morning after the ceaseless vigil of the night. At last, the Commander asked for a volunteer for this particular and dangerous post. A brave young fellow dauntlessly offered himself, but the Commander made this stipulation, that if the sentinel heard so much as the wing of a bird he was to fire, and this he promised to do. He took his position ; the night wore on, and nothing happened, and the young soldier began to feel sorry that no call had come to test his valour and fealty ; but just as the darkness was dispelled by the dawn he saw in the distance, lying in the long grass, what appeared to be a wild boar ; “ not with powder and shot,” he said ; but just then he remembered the command “ that if he heard the wing of a bird he must fire,” so he levelled his gun and fired. The shriek of a Red Indian was heard as he fell dead, for he was concealed in the skin of the supposed wild boar, with a bow and arrow ready to be used against the young sentinel, and which had been the deadly weapon that accounted for the death of his comrades on previous mornings.

We must always keep our armour on : the sword must always be at hand, and the smallest stir must cause us to sound an alarm : for the enemy of souls disguises himself, and watches the unguarded moments and places.

“ Principalities and powers,
Mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thy unguarded hours ;
Watch and pray.

“ Gird thy heavenly armour on,
Wear it ever night and day :

Ambushed lies the evil one ;
 Watch and pray.

“ Watch, as if on that alone
 Hung the issue of the day :
 Pray, that help may be sent down ;
 Watch and pray.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

IN writing to the Christians at Corinth, Paul says, "Ye also helping together by prayer for us," and thus directs our minds to the important subject that is indicated at the head of this chapter. When we speak of the Church we do not mean any local community, but the whole Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The need of the consideration of this subject will be granted on every hand. Side by side with a great enrichment of the Church of Christ there is a widespread impoverishment, and the consciousness of wealth makes us the more painfully aware of our own poverty. As to the enrichment of the Church, she abounds materially more than in any previous period of her history. In regard to means and methods, she is richer than ever before. Equipment and organisation are seen everywhere, yet one wonders sometimes whether the organisations that abound within the area of the Church's life and activities are not in danger of becoming a fungus growth, sapping away the life of the Church, and producing no fruitfulness. We still have the masses around about us, and seem helpless to touch them. We meet with problems on the right hand, and on the left, and the Church seems to be so paralysed that she really cannot effectively

help. Is it not possible to be "increased in goods" and yet poor ?

These considerations drive us to the fact that *the great need in the Church of the living God to-day is that of praying*. Our Lord having prayed in the presence of His disciples, they turned to Him and said, "Teach us to pray." The more one considers these words, the more we see in them. They did not ask Him to teach them *how* to pray. We add the word "how." That word brings us immediately to the *theory* of prayer. We are well acquainted with that. We know *how* to pray. But the disciples did not make that request. They said, "Lord, teach us to pray." It is possible to know *how* to pray, yet not to pray ; to be well acquainted with the theory of the exercise, yet to be ignorant of the real, practical exercise itself. So may the Lord by His Spirit help us to see something of what that exercise is, and what is its place in the varied ministry of the Church of the Redeemer.

It will be well for us, in the first place, to notice the Scriptural and fundamental conception of effectual prayer. It has its relationship to the three Persons in the Trinity, to the Word of God, and to consistency of life in the men and women who pray. Let us consider *its relationship to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. When we pray, we must believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of all who diligently seek Him. There must be no hesitancy or doubt in our mind as to the Divine Being, as to His faithfulness, His perfection, His honour, His glory ; no doubt as to the veracity of His Word, the veracity of His truth. God is the embodiment of all these realities, and if we would be effectual in prayer, one of the elementary things of which we must be fully persuaded is that God is able and willing to be the rewarder of all who diligently seek Him. But

when we approach Him Who is infinitely holy, righteous, just and true in all His ways, we recognise at once, as we come into the light of His countenance, we are unlike Him ; we are sinful and He is holy ; we are unholy, and He is matchless purity. We say, " Wherewith shall we approach such a holy Being ? " That at once makes us to know *the need of the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ*. So prayer has direct relationship to the second Person in the Trinity, Jesus Christ the Mediator, Who stands between God and the sinner, Who stands before the guilty man and the Father of Glory, and says, " No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." There is no other way than this new and living way. We sing frequently, " Take the name of Jesus with you." It is absolutely essential that we take this name with us. Our own name is not enough. If we would pray the effectual prayer, we must put our feet on redemption ground and plead the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. These are elementary truths, but we need to be reminded of them, and they need to be emphasised. We are so prone to forget them. It was Dr. Chalmers who said, " I like to begin my waking moments with a confident hold of the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and then I can pray." It is when we believe God is, without doubt, when by faith we lay hold of Jesus Christ as the means of our acceptance before God, also that we have the privilege of standing in the immediate presence of God, with the full assurance of our acceptance through another, we are then in a position to pray. We must get a firm grip of that. If we would pray, and pray effectually, we must stand beneath the shadow of the Cross and plead the blood and righteousness of Jesus. But something more is needed, *the Holy Spirit must be our teacher in prayer*. He is always

near at hand and ready to instruct us. We have not to wait for Him ; He frequently has to wait for us. He knows the mind of the Father, and He can teach the will of the Father to us ; thus possessing the human heart, guiding and directing our thoughts, prompting desires, and giving birth to new hopes which are in harmony with the Divine mind and will. The Holy Spirit leads us into the knowledge of the revealed purposes of God, so that we may pray in harmony with His mind and will. All *true* prayer is answered. It cannot be otherwise, because true prayer is the outcome of the movement of the Holy Ghost upon the soul. How little do we really effectually pray !

Prayer has a relationship not only to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but *to the written Word*. Men who have been effectual in prayer have always been those who have been conversant with the Scriptures. The late George Müller, of Bristol, left it on record : " I rarely go into the presence of God to plead with Him for blessing until His Word has gripped my heart and I, by faith, have laid hold of some promise that I can plead at His feet." And if we would exercise this valuable ministry in the midst of the Church we must be men and women of the Bible. We must know its truths, not treating them sceptically, but accepting them as the mind and will of God. With abiding confidence we must enter His presence to ask Him to do what He has declared He will do.

There must be consistency of life and walk if men and women are going to do business with God. " If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." My conscience must be void of offence, my heart must not condemn me when I come into the presence of God. He is not mocked. We cannot deceive Him ; we may be able to deceive one another, but when we come to God we appear

just as we are, and not what other people think we are. Sin must be faced ; sin must be acknowledged. If we go from the communion table to the whist drive ; if we go to the tap room and drink, and also drink from the silver cup of the symbol of the precious blood of Jesus, the two things are utterly inconsistent, and we cannot pray. The Rev. Mr. Bevan, of Yarmouth, relates a striking incident. A man had been converted during his ministry, but after some years he lapsed into a state of depression and backsliding. Mr. Bevan came across his path, and began to talk to him. The man laid bare his heart and said, " I pray, I read the Bible, and I do this, that, and the other thing, but no peace or joy comes ; the old fervour has left me." Mr. Bevan hardly knew how to deal with the case. Presently he said to the man, " Well now, look here, when you get down on your knees alone before God, what is it that comes right in front of you ? " Ah, Mr. Bevan had touched a sore. " Oh," the man said, " I did not think you were going to ask me that question." " I am not a confessor, of course," said Mr. Bevan, " but I do want to help you." " Well," said the man, " I will tell you. It is like this, I owe a man some money, and though I have the means to pay it, I made up my mind I would not pay it. Every time I kneel down it is that money that comes right up in front of me." " Well," said Mr. Bevan, " go straight away at once and pay it." " But," said the man, " He and I are at loggerheads." " Ah," said Mr. Bevan, " that's just it. You will have to pay it. You may go to heaven, but you will certainly have no peace or joy on the way." The man went away feeling that he could not humble himself to do it, but he became so restless, that at night he went to the other man's house and knocked at the door. When his creditor, who had retired to rest,

came down and asked what he wanted, he said, " I have come to pay you your money, because I have no rest of soul while it is owing to you. I have also come to ask you to shake hands with me, and to say I forgive you any wrong, and I hope you as freely forgive me." The two men embraced each other, the business transaction was settled, and the man went straight back to the vicarage and told Mr. Bevan what peace and joy had come into his heart as a result. There are hundreds of men and women who are losing the joy of effectual prayer because there is some inconsistency somewhere. They have too much pride to acknowledge it. They have not sufficient humility to give in. It may mean the sacrifice of pride ; but it is worth it !

Prayer that is to be a ministry of value in the Church is an attitude as well as an exercise ! The soul must be in the attitude of prayer ; not necessarily going upon our knees, or talking with God behind closed doors ; but the heart or mind must be kept in an habitual attitude, prayerful in its character, towards the Lord. We seem to spend so much time preparing to pray, getting ready for prayer, praying that we may know how to pray. We need to be always in the attitude of prayer. When Nehemiah went before the Persian king, the king said to him, " Thy countenance is sad, what is thy request ? " Nehemiah says, " So I prayed to the God of Heaven and said to the king." Evidently he was a man of prayer. It was no strange thing for him to turn like a lightning flash to God, and to talk to Him right there in the presence of the king. Some of us seem to need an hour or two to get the soul into the right attitude, whereas it ought to be always in the spirit of prayer. What do we mean by "attitude" ? Standing on redemption ground, in the exercise

of believing faith, confident that you may expect that for which you ask ; holding God to His Word ; moving about conscious of a fellowship and close relationship of a practical character with God, concerning all business and other transactions of your daily life. It is not that we are to go about with a face that looks prayerful. We are not to appear to *men* to fast, and we are not to pray at the street corners, but you are to pray to your Father in secret, and He will see to it that there is an open reward. Others will see it when *He* manifests it. A young lassie, who had been up all night in prayer, came to her minister and said, " I have spent the night in prayer." " Have you ? " he said. " Yes," she cried, " Can you not see how one's face shines, as Moses' face did ? " " No," said the minister quietly, " I cannot, because I remember that Moses' face shone—but he did not know it ! " If we would live in the attitude of prayer, it is not going on our knees, putting our hands together and talking ; it is soul exercise. It is the deep, inner life with God,—on board ship, in the train, tram, omnibus, here, there, anywhere,—always in touch. Even when we are engaged in frolic and fun with the young people or the children, we may nevertheless still be in prayer ! If this be so, how can anything be indulged that puts us out of touch with God ?

The potency of the exercise lies in the nature and possibility of prayer. Prayer is wonderful indeed ! " More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." It was Livingstone who said of Robert Bruce, " Every sentence that falls from his lips is like a strong bolt shot right up to heaven." Prayer has a power in it because it is a means of grace to the praying man and woman. In a Church, when she is alive with the spirit of prayer, the very praying becomes an avenue of grace to herself. That

is why we should advocate that every Church ought to maintain its weekly meetings for really earnest devotion and prayer. It is not only blessing to the outsider, but it brings blessing to ourselves ; it blesses the whole community. The man who never will go to a prayer meeting, —well, he is a starved man ; he misses half the joy and peace he might possess.

Prayer has a three-fold aspect. *God-ward ; Satan-ward ; Man-ward*. It is God-ward, inasmuch as prayer rises unto Him, and there we touch “ the secret source of every precious thing.” There are men and women one cannot deal with, but the hearts of all men are in the hands of God. We can talk with God, and He can deal with them. We may say we want to go to China, and we also say we cannot possibly go. Yes, we can ; talk to God about China, and in that way we can go to China. We may go to Africa, any part of the world, in the spirit of prayer. When the Church really learns the secret of this prevailing prayer, she will do more missionary work at home than by going abroad. Someone must go ; but the praying will produce men and women who will be ready to go at any cost. It is blessed to enter into the reality of this truth, that when we pray we are touching the Hand that rules the universe ! When we are dealing with God we are dealing with the Maker and Creator of the whole earth, Who holds all national and international negotiations in His own hands, Who can over-rule and supervise as He pleases, Who knows all our business and commercial transactions, and hears the prayers of godly men in relation to every one of them ! There is a solemn side to all this, yet a very blessed side. Difficulties that are quite beyond us can be dealt with by Him. Let us rise to the possibilities of prayer.

Prayer is Satan-ward. Every true prayer, every prayer offered in the name of the risen, triumphant Saviour, is against Satan and against his kingdom—always. We can quite understand how he fears and trembles when there is a real live prayer-spirit. When we come together for the real purpose of praying, or when in the quietness and silence of our own room we are in touch with God, the devil will not be far off, for he knows our prayers are like weapons against him. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." It should be the Christian's very air and atmosphere. It is the weapon that he can use to beat back the forces of darkness and of evil spirits.

Prayer is Man-ward. It is by this exercise of prayer, privately or collectively, that we bring men, women, and children to God; the mother brings her boy, the father brings his son, friend brings friend, sister brings brother. It does not depend upon our talking *to* them. It does very largely depend upon our talking to God *about* them. But we must pray the believing prayer. We must pray the prayer that doubts nothing; for the unstable man receives nothing of the Lord.

Real, earnest praying must be part of the Church's labour and work. We must learn that praying is really the most laborious undertaking for any soul in the Church's ministry. It is infinitely harder to pray, as a constituent part of the Church's service, than to take a class, or to address a thousand people. To get into real touch with God, we have to sweat. George Herbert speaks of praying as "soul-blood,"—blood oozing out of the soul. Shall we consider this part of the Church's labour? What a lot of time we spend, what long committee meetings we have sometimes in arranging various efforts,—perhaps some kind of amuse-

ment for the young people ; but how little time we spend in prayer as the greatest labour and work of the Church ! Do we remember that Paul says of Epaphras, that he always “laboured fervently in prayer” ? Laboured ! Surely going down on one’s knees for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour and talking to God is easy enough ? If we speak like that, we evidently know nothing at all about praying. When we are laying hold of God about that boy, praying his soul out of the clutches of Satan, praying his soul out of the very depths of the hell of his sinful life, we are beating back the forces of darkness, we are giving the devil blow after blow, and the devil will see to it that we do not find it an easy matter. Yet, in ten minutes with our heart, we may accomplish more than in four or five hours with our hands.

Sincere praying always gives rise to a revival. When we have learned to pray we shall experience and understand the meaning of revival. Someone went to Evan Roberts once and asked him the secret of the great movement in Wales. He said there was no secret, but—“Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” A sermon preached in Carnarvonshire by Robert Roberts was the apparent cause of a great awakening in the principality. It is said a hundred souls were savingly impressed by its delivery. Some days later, a friend of the preacher said, “Tell me, where did you get that wonderful sermon ?” Roberts led his friend to a small room and said, “It was here I found the sermon you speak of—on the floor here, all night long, turning backward and forward, with my face sometimes on the earth.” When D. L. Moody came to London he said he owed all his success to a dear saint of God, an invalid lying in the north of London, who had been praying

for years that Mr. Moody might come to the very Church in Holloway where he began his great London ministry. Let us close this book with the request on our lips, and uttered with all our heart and soul,

“ LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY ! ”

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